THE SABBATH AND THE LORD'S DAY

BY CHARLES A. WEISMAN

THE

SABBATH

AND

THE LORD'S DAY

VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF REASON, REVELATION, LAW, RACE AND HISTORY

by

Charles A. Weisman

"We are to Account the Sanctification of one day in seven a duty which God's immutable law doth exact for ever."

----Richard Hooker, 1592.

"Every day's observation and experience confirm the opinion that the ordinances which require the observance of one day in seven, and the Christian faith which hallows it, are our chief security for all civil and religious liberty, for temporal blessings and spiritual hopes."

----William H. Seward, 1842.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." —Exodus 20:8. "Which is by meditating the spiritual rest, by hearing God's word, and resting from worldly travails."

----Geneva Bible Translators.

"You shall therefore keep the Sabbath." —Exodus 31:14. "God repeats this point because the whole keeping of the law stands in the true use of the Sabbath, which is to cease from our works, and to obey the will of God."

----Geneva Bible Translators.

Cover Illustration: The first brick church building built at Jamestown, Virginia, 1639.

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INTRODUCTION

Why is there a Sabbath issue? The Sabbath is something which most actually want to have and to follow. Nearly all can readily see the importance and necessity for rest at regular intervals. To take a periodic rest at set times from our everyday routine of work and business is a necessary part of life, and provides for the betterment of the individual and community. The Sabbath is also one of the Ten Commandments of God, which gives it a reverence that most want to respect.

Nearly all would agree to the necessity of having a Sabbath observed at a specific day and time by all in a community. This is part of the reason why so many arguments on the Sabbath issue have centered on what day and time the Sabbath should be observed. It becomes a singly fixed concept in the argument. Ironically, it is this very approach that has kept them from seeing and understanding what actually is the proper day and time. By being so singly fixed on the question they have failed to see or consider other areas that could guide them to the answer. With this material we will look at the Sabbath issue from the areas of law, history, race, and the ways of God.[1]

The Sabbath issue reveals some very serious problems that tower above the problem of not having the right day or time. It reveals problems of inconsistency and hypocrisy. It shows why we have many of the political and legal problems of the day and our deficiencies in solving them and governing our lives. In short, it reveals many problems in our way of thinking. It is for this reason that this book has been written.

We thus need to look into and examine each of these areas with regard to the Sabbath issue. We will start by looking at the historical aspect and then the area of law.

1 I say the "ways of God" instead of Scripture because it better describes what is to be obtained. It is not merely words from Scripture, but revealing the intent of the Creator. Further, all things "biblical" are not necessarily the ways of God, nor are all ways of God revealed in the Bible only.

1

THE SABBATH IN ANGLO-SAXON HISTORY

Most who have attempted to answer or determine the "true Sabbath" have went directly to the Bible and kept their focus in the Bible at all times until they came up with what they "believe" the answer is. They never have thought of also looking at other areas or sources of information on the matter. This has kept many from seeing the whole picture and the true plan of God on the subject of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is an issue of law and not all law is in the Bible. It is like trying to determine if fluoride in water is healthy or not from the Bible only. While the Bible has many things to say on health, not all matters of health are in the Bible.

Many today have a Pharisaical mind set and think that all information regarding a subject such as the Sabbath must come 100% from the Bible, and they end up trying to extract information out of it that just isn't there. The Pharisees were off point on every issue because they put such a total and extreme emphasis on religion and on scriptural procedure and form, missing the spirit or principle of what God had intended. Those who have put all their emphasis for understanding the Sabbath on procedure found in the Bible have likewise been off point.

The Sabbath is one issue that can not be properly understood by a Pharisaical or super pious position that we must only use the Bible to determine what the truth is on the matter. This is what the Creationists have done, they read a few chapters of Genesis and claim to know everything about the origin of the universe, the earth and life. They become experts in geology, anthropology, biology and astronomy by the Bible only. This has caused them to say many foolish and incorrect things. The

major source of the origins question is not to be derived from the Bible but from other sources. Likewise, there are other sources that will lead us to the truth regarding the Sabbath, for God did not stop with the Apostles in moving His people to establish His law and His will. Such acts are just as much regarded as Divine law as anything God instructed Moses. Thus not all acts of Divine Providence or Revelation are in the Bible, and we must rely on other sources that will lead us to the law God intended on the Sabbath. For the Sabbath issue evidently is not one that is so clear cut as is the law on stealing or murder.

It is said that law is often a study of history. Thus when a judge or legal scholar seeks to determine that law on a particular matter they will go back into history to see what was practiced or done with the matter. There are certain well understood maxims of law that we should consider regarding an issue such as the law on the Sabbath:

> *We are to adhere to precedents, and not to unsettled things which are not established.*
>
> *Antiquity did nothing without a good reason. Thus, nothing should be rashly changed.*
>
> *Things derogatory to the common law are not to be drawn into precedent.*[1]

What happened in the history of our race is a guide to what the law is on a certain subject. Legal scholars and jurists will always look back in history because the law is generally regarded as settled in nearly all areas, and we should adhere to historical precedents and settled principles, as Justice Field said:

> The Law is a science, whose leading principles are settled. They are not to be opened for discussion upon the elevation to the bench of every new Judge, however subtle his intellect, or profound his learning, or logical his reasoning.[2]

It thus is important for us to take a look at the history of our race and the history of our country to see what the "established" law is on the matter of the Sabbath.

1 See *Maxims of Law,* edited by the author, pp. 19, 82-83.

2 *Ex parte Newman,* 9 Calif. 502, 526 (1858).

When the twelve tribes of Israel were formed, they each were assigned certain traits, blessings, promises and prophecies that would to some extent dictate their destiny and prescribe what they would do in the future. These are recorded in Genesis 49 and throughout the Old Testament. As these people migrated into Europe the Israelite tribes formed the various tribes of Europe—the Angles, Goths, Danes, Celts, Saxons, Jutes, Normans, Vikings, Lombards, Franks, Vandals, Burgundians, Cimbri and others. We find among such European tribes and nations the fulfillment of the traits and prophecies assigned to each of the tribes of Israel. Some have excelled as builders and designers, some as explorers, some as artists, some as evangelists spreading the word of God, some have been mariners, warriors, or farmers.

It was the tribe of Judah that was to be the ruler and lawgiver in Israel — *"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet"* (Gen. 49:10). The Judahites became the Germanic-Saxon people. European history shows that it has been the Saxon people more than any other tribes that stand out as being skilled in matters of law and government.

The origin of what we know as the common law is not found in England, but comes from the Germanic forests—the homeland of the Saxons. The Saxon people, and thus the law, spread to France, Scandinavia, and into England. As you follow the migration of the Saxons you will follow the establishment of good law and government. The record of these people show a very early attachment to honoring the "Lord's Day" or Sunday as a special day of worship and rest. This custom was often made a matter of law to guard the sanctity of that day.

The Germanic-Saxon people moved into ancient Gaul (France) and became known as the Franks. They rose to fame under their hero **Clovis** (466-511 A.D.), who founded the Frankish monarchy. Clovis married a Christian princess, and converted to Christianity himself after he had obtained a miraculous victory in a battle in which he called upon Jesus Christ for assistance.[3] During the rule of Clovis' sons, the

3 Ierne Plunket, *A History of Europe,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927, p. 57.

"Council of Orleans" was formed at Orleans, France (c. 512 A.D.), from which the following decree was issued regarding the Lord's Day:

> Whereas the people are persuaded that they ought not to travel on the Lord's day with the horses, or oxen and carriages, or to prepare anything for food, or to do anything conducive to the cleanliness of houses or men, or things which belong to Jewish rather than Christian observances; we have ordained that on the Lord's day what was before lawful to be done may still be done. But from rural work, i.e., plowing, cultivating vines, reaping, mowing, thrashing, clearing away thorns or hedging, we judge it better to abstain, that the people may the more readily come to the churches and have leisure for prayers. If anyone be found doing the works forbidden above, let him be punished, not as the civil authorities may direct, but as the ecclesiastical powers may determine.[4]

The Lord's Day was a term used in the Saxon language to designate Sunday, the first day of the week. This thus is a clear recognition of Sunday as a day of rest. When **Chlothar** became King of France in 558 A.D., he issued an edict forbidding "all servile labors on the Lord's Day."[5] The reason he assigned for it was that the law of the "sacred Scriptures" prohibited work on that day. An early Saxon law regarding rest on the Sabbath day was issued by the Merovingian kings of Gaul in 585 A.D., through **"Council of Macon,"** which directed the following:

> Keep the Lord's day whereon ye were born anew and freed from all sin. Let no one spend his leisure in litigation; let no one continue the pleading of any cause. Let no one under the plea of necessity allow himself to place a yoke on the neck of his cattle. Let all be occupied in mind and body in hymns, and in the praise of God. . . .Let your eyes and hands on that day be lifted up to God. For this is the day of perpetual rest. This is shadowed to us in the seventh day in the law and the prophets.[6]

4 David N. Laband, *Blue Laws —The History, Economics, and Politics of Sunday-Closing Laws,* Lexington Books, 1987, pp. 12-13.

5 Wilbur Crafts, *The Sabbath For Man,* N.Y., Funk & Wagnalls, 1885, p. 556.

6 Laband, *Blue Laws,* p. 13.

The Saxons migrated to England in the late 5th and early 6th century, forming various kingdoms. In 673 A.D., **Ina** became King of Wessex. One law passed under his reign involved the Lord's Day, which stated:

> If a slave work on Sunday by his lord's command, let him be free; and let the lord pay thirty shillings as a fine. . . .But if a freeman work on that day without his lord's command, let him forfeit his freedom, or sixty shillings; and a priest be doubly liable. [7]

A similar law was passed in 696 A.D., under **King Withread**, the king of Kentishmen, by way of the "Council of Berkhamstead." It forbade all work on the Lord's Day, under penalties that were graduated.[8] Among the records of the eighth century, is a canon from the "Council of Clovishoff," enacted November, 747 A.D., in the reign of **Eidelbald**, King of the Mercians. It states:

> In the fourteenth place it is ordained that the Lord's day be celebrated by all, with due veneration and wholly separated for divine service. And let all abbots and priests, on that most sacred day, remain in their monasteries and churches, and say solemn mass; let them by preaching instruct the servants subject to them, from the oracle of the holy Scriptures, the rules of religious conversation, and of good living.[9]

Back in France, a synod held at Friuli in 791 A.D., under **Pepin,** King of France, drew up a canon regarding the Lord's Day which savours very strongly of Old Testament Sabbath law. During the reign of **Charlemagne** (768-814 A.D.), king of France, Spain, Italy, Germany, & Hungary, two Councils were held, one at Mayence and the other at Rheims, which issued canons against doing servile work on the Lord's Day. The latter Council grounded its prohibition on "the precept of the Lord."[10] Charlemagne (800 A.D.) had also issued the following law:

7 Benjamin Thorpe, *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England* (1840) p. 69.

8 James Hessey, *Sunday: Its Origin and History,* (N.Y., 1880), p. 89.

9 John Johnson, M.A., *Laws and Canons of the Church of England, from its foundation to Henry VIII,* Oxford, 1850, Vol. I, p. 249.

10 Hessey, op. cit., p. 88.

> We do ordain, as it is required in the law of God, that no man shall do any servile work on the Lord's-day: namely, that they employ not themselves in works of husbandry, making hay, fencing or hedging, grubbing and felling trees, digging in the mines, building houses, planting orchards; and that they go not a hunting in the fields, or plead in courts of justice; that women weave not or dress cloth, do no needlework or card wool, or beat hemp, or wash linen openly, or shear sheep; but that they all come to church to magnify the Lord their God, for those good things, which, on this day, He bestowed on them.[11]

The advent of **Alfred the Great** to the English throne in 871, brought about a strong support for moral concepts to be enforced by civil law. Through Alfred's efforts a written code was complied, prefaced by the Ten Commandments and ending with the Golden Rule.[12] Among these laws was the following:

> Law 7. If anyone engage in Sunday marketing, let him forfeit the chattel, and twelve ores (192 pence), among the Danes, and thirty shillings among the English.[13]

Alfred, like his predecessors, had the title of "King of the West Saxons," but later changed the title to, "King of the Anglo-Saxons." This title was also used by his son Edward, and by his grandson, **King Aethelstane.** Under King Aethelstane certain laws were enacted by the Council of Greatanlea, in 925 A.D., including the following:

> Law 24. And that no marketing be on Sundays; but if any one do so, let him forfeit the goods, and pay thirty shillings as wite (a fine).[14]

By the time of **King Edgar,** who reigned from 957 to 975, the race, language, religion, customs, form of government, and divisions of the country were, in their main characteristics, what

11 Wilbur Crafts, *The Sabbath For Man,* New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1885 p. 556. Charlemagne had also issued a special edict against Sunday marketing.

12 D. H. Montgomery, *The Leading Facts of English History,* Boston: Ginn & Company, 1893, p. 42.

13 Thorpe, op. cit., p. 73.

14 Ibid., p. 90.

they were long to remain, and in some respects what they are today.[15] The same is true regarding Sunday and the Lord's Day. Among the "Canons of Edgar," we find the following:

> 19. And we enjoin that Sunday trading and folk-motes (general assembly) be abstained from.[16]

When Edgar's son **Ethelred II** became king (978-1016) a group of laws were passed known as *Liber Constitutiorum.* Law 13 of this code reads:

> Let Sunday's festival be rightly kept, as is thereto becoming; and let marketings, and folk-motes be carefully abstained from on that holy day. [17]

Also under the reign of Ethelred II there was a Council of Enham which enacted several laws. Some of the laws were directed at making sure that the "Sunday festival be rightly kept." The aim was to provide everyone with a set procedure of what to do on the Sunday feast, so that "they strictly abstain from Sunday marketings and popular meetings."[18]

Certain laws are attributed to **Aelfric**, the "Unknown Archbishop." Among the *Ecclesiastical Institutes* of Aelfric that were drafted around 995 A.D., is the following:

> 24. Sunday is very solemnly to be reverenced, therefore we command that no man dare on that holy day to apply to any worldly work, unless for the preparing of his meat; or except it happen to any one that he must of necessity journey. . . On Sunday God first created the light, and on that day he sent to the people of Israel, in the desert, heavenly bread; and on that day he rose from death, when he before, with his own will, had suffered death for the salvation of mankind; and on that day he sent the Holy Ghost into his disciples.[19]

15 Edward P. Cheyney, *A Short History of England,* Boston: Ginn and Co., 1919, p. 71.

16 Thorpe, op. cit., p. 397.

17 A. H. Lewis, *A Critical History of Sunday Legislation,* New York: Appleton & Co., 1888, p. 76.

18 Ibid., pp. 76, 77.

19 Thorpe, p. 452; Lewis, op. cit., p. 75.

An edict issued under **Canute,** King of Denmark, and who also became King of all England in 1017 A.D., regulated Sunday as the Sabbath in the following edict:

> Sunday marketing we also strictly forbid everywhere, and every folk-mote (general assembly), unless it be for great necessity; and let huntings and all other worldly works be strictly abstained from on that holy day.[20]

One of the more significant English laws regarding Sunday activities was a decree issued by **King Henry III** in 1237 A.D., prohibiting the frequenting of public markets on Sunday. A statute passed under **Edward III** in 1354, prohibited the display and sale of wool goods on Sunday and solemn feast days. Under **Richard II** a measure was enacted (1388 A.D.) which forbade servants and laborers from engaging in certain gaming events on Sunday. A statute under **Henry IV** in 1409 A.D., prohibited playing any unlawful games on Sundays. The 27th statute of **Henry VI**, enacted in 1448 A.D., forbade Sunday markets and fairs, except on four Sundays of harvest. A supplement to this act was made under **Edward IV** in 1464, which forbid *"cobblers and cordwainers in the city of London . . .on any Sunday in the year, . . .to command or cause to be sold, any shoes, hose, or galoshes, under the penalty of the forfeiture of the article and a fine of twenty shillings for every offense."*[21]

A most notable Sunday law in English history was that given by order of **Edward VI** in 1546. Within this act it was directed that all the king's subjects "shall henceforth celebrate and keep their holy day [Sunday] according to God's holy will and pleasure." In doing so the day shall be "wholly given to God, in hearing the word of God read and taught in private and public prayers, visiting the sick, etc."[22] In 1552 Edward re-enacted these laws prohibiting Sunday labor, with an exception for works of necessity. This law was again re-enacted in a statute issued by **James I** in 1618.

20 Lewis, op. cit., p. 77.

21 Lewis, op. cit., pp. 91, 92. Also, 4 Statutes of Edward IV, chap. vii.

22 Wilbur Crafts, *The Sabbath For Man,* p. 557.

SIR WILLIAM BLACKSTONE ON THE SABBATH

"Profanation of the Lord's day, vulgarly (i.e., in the vernacular) called *Sabbath-breaking,* is the ninth offence against God and religion, punished by the municipal law of England. For, besides the notorious indecency and scandal of permitting any secular business to be publicly transacted on that day, in a country professing Christianity, and the corruption of morals which usually follows its profanation, the keeping one day in seven holy, as a time of relaxation and refreshment as well as for public worship, is of admirable service to a State, considered merely as a civil institution. It humanizes by the help of conversation and society the manners of the lower classes, which would otherwise degenerate into a sordid ferocity and savage selfishness of spirit; it enables the industrious workman to pursue his occupation in the ensuing week with health and cheerfulness; it imprints on the minds of the people that sense of their duty to God, so necessary to make them good citizens; but which yet would be worn out and defaced by an unremitted continuance of labor without any stated times of recalling them to the worship of their Maker."

—*Commentaries on the Laws of England,* Vol. 2, Book iv, chap. iv, pp. 63, 64.

An act under **Charles I**, c. 1, (1625) had forbid any meeting of people outside their own parishes on the Lord's day for any sports or pastimes, or any meetings within the parish for bear-baiting, bull-baiting, interludes, common plays or other unlawful exercises. An act of 1627 (3 Car. I, c.1) forbade any

carrier, waggon-man, car-man, wain-man or drover to travel, or for any butcher to kill or sell meat on the Lord's day. [23]

In 1661, **Charles II** issued a Sabbath law for Scotland, ratifying former laws forbidding certain acts on Sunday. But the most commonly recognized Sabbath law under Charles II, and which had much influence upon the culture of England and its colonies, was the act passed by Parliament in 1676. This act was titled, *"An act for the better observation of the Lord's day, commonly called Sunday."* It provided in part:

> That no tradesman, artificer, workman, laborer, or other person whatsoever shall do or exercise any worldly labor, business or work of their ordinary callings upon the Lord's day, or any part thereof (works of necessity and charity only excepted).[24]

This law also declared all legal process served on Sunday void, except in cases of treason, felony and breach of the peace. This act was, until 1776, the general Sabbath law of the American colonies as a part of the British Empire; and was the model of most of the subsequent American Sabbath laws. It also was the law of England, Ireland and Wales into the 20th century.

The setting aside of Sunday as a day of rest and cessation from work and worldly business, and as a special day of worship, became a prominent part of the Anglo-Saxon common law. This body of law prevailed not only in England and in much of Europe, but also had an impact in those countries where the Anglo-Saxon people migrated to and colonized. This includes America, Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and other white settlements.

We thus see that the keeping or observing of Sunday as the Sabbath, is a very ancient precept in Anglo-Saxon history. For over 15 centuries Sunday was regarded as the Lord's Day— a day of rest and worship. The Sunday Sabbath is thus a very prominent aspect of Anglo-Saxon common law.

23 *Chambers's Encyclopedia,* Vol. 12, "Sabbath," (Oxford, 1967) p. 124.

24 Statutes at Large, 29 Chas. II, chap. 7, p. 412, (12 Char. 2, p. 412). Also in *Rosenbaum v. State,* 131 Ark. 251, 261, 199 S.W. 388, 391 (1917).

2

AMERICAN LAW & HISTORY ON THE SABBATH

THE COLONIAL FOUNDATION

It is often recognized that the founding of America by the white, Christian settlers from Europe was heavily guided by Divine Providence. It is well acknowledge by the best legal authorities that the original laws, customs, and modes of thinking of the colonial founders establishes a legal precedent of what the "law in the land" is to be. We thus look at the history of early America as evidence of what the law is on a certain matter. The following is a listing from each colony as to the legal foundations of America on the subject of the Sabbath:

Virginia Colony — The history of America's legal foundations began with the first permanent colonies in Jamestown, Virginia. The settlers of Virginia were emigrants from England where the civil and ecclesiastical law recognized Sunday as the Sabbath day. "The first immigrants arrived in Chesapeake Bay on a Sunday in April 1607, and immediately debarked at a place they named Cape Henry. Pushing ahead, they erected a cross at their settlement on the James River on a Sunday in May. The Reverend Richard Hunt subsequently conducted public worship there according to Anglican rites. John Smith recalled how the whole company except for guards assembled twice daily for common prayer and gathered every Sunday under an awning or in an old tent for two sermons."[1]

1 Winton Solberg, *Redeem the Time,* Harvard University Press, 1977, p. 86. It is also interesting to note the the first official discovery of America by John Cabot on June 24, 1497, was on a Sunday.

To establish discipline in the colony, the Virginia Company appointed Sir Thomas Gates lieutenant general and dispatched him with eight ships in June 1609. The following April a second party sailed under Lord De La Warr, who had been named governor. On his departure for Virginia De La Warr was advised by Rev. William Crashaw in a sermon not to look at the worldly gain, but *"at those high and better ends that concern the Kingdom of God."* He urged the governor to *"let the Sabbath be wholly and holily observed, and public prayers daily frequented."*[2]

When Gates arrived in Virginia he found the conditions to be so deplorable that he decided to evacuate the colony. But at the mouth of the James River the party met the expedition under De La Warr, who turned them back to Jamestown. Gates immediately laid down a strict code of laws, which he promulgated on May 24, 1610, and were approved by De La Warr on June 12. Among this body of laws was one which dealt with the Sabbath and church attendance on Sunday:

> Every man and woman shall repair in the morning to the divine service and sermons preached upon the Sabbath day, and in the afternoon to divine service, and catechising, upon pain for the first fault to lose their provision and the allowance for the whole week following.[3]

The law also prescribed the death penalty upon the third offense of "profaning the Lord's Day." The minister was to choose four men to see that the Sabbath was not profaned by disorderly gaming, drunkenness, or intemperate meetings.

This body of laws which contained the above Sabbath law was not only the first law passed in the colony of Virginia, but was the first law ever enacted on American soil. In 1623, the Cavaliers of Virginia passed a law that provided, "whosoever shall absent himself from divine service any Sunday, without allowable excuse, shall forfeit a pound of tobacco."[4]

2 Solberg, op. cit., p. 86.

3 *Laws Divine, Moral and Martial for the Colony in Virginia,* Hartford, 1876.

4 Hening, *Statutes at Large of Virginia, 1619-1660,* vol. I, p. 123.

In 1629, the authorities were ordered to take care that the above law was carefully executed, and to "see that the Sabbath-day be not ordinarily profaned by working in any employments, or by journeying from place to place."[5] In the years that Virginia remained a colony of England, the people continued to safeguard the sacred character of the First Day.

Carolina Colony — The Assembly of North Carolina enacted a law on April 4, 1741. The need and purpose for the act was expressed in its title: *An Act For Keeping Holy The Lord's Day.* The Act read as follows:

> Whereas in well-regulated governments effectual care is always taken that the day set apart for public worship be observed and kept holy; and, to suppress vice and immorality, Wherefore, . . . be it enacted . . . That all and every person and persons whatsoever shall, on the Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday, carefully apply themselves to the duties of religion and piety; and that no tradesman, artisan, planter, laborer, or other person whatsoever, shall upon the land or water do or exercise any labor, business or work of their ordinary callings (works of charity and necessity only excepted).[6]

The law also provided for a fine of ten shillings for every person violating the law. One can plainly see the civil and ecclesiastical character and objective of this act. The basic content of this law stayed active into the 20th century. The Sunday law of South Carolina, passed December 12, 1712, was almost identical with this law, and was in fact the model after which this one was copied.

New Jersey Colony — In 1693, the colonial legislature passed an act to keep the Sabbath day from being profaned by unnecessary work being performed. The act was titled: *An Act For Preventing Profanation of the Lord's Day,* and stated that:

5 Hening, *Statutes at Large of Virginia, 1619-1660,* vol. I, p. 144.

6 *American State Papers Bearing on Sunday Legislation,* Complied by William Blakely, Washington, D.C.: The Religious Liberty Association, 1911, (Revised Ed., Da Capo Press, N.Y., 1970), p. 53-54. Citing, *Revisal of Acts of Assembly of North Carolina,* 1773, p. 68.

> Whereas it hath been the practice of all societies of Christian professors to set apart one day in the week for the worship and service of God, and that it hath been and is the ancient law of England (according to the practice of the primitive Christians), to set apart the first day of the week to that end, and finding by experience that the same good practice and law hath been greatly neglected in this province, to the grief of such as profess the Christian religion, and to the scandal thereof. Be it therefore enacted, . . . that if any person or persons shall within this province be found doing any unnecessary servile labor, or shall travel upon the Lord's day, or first day (except to some religious service or worship, or other wise in case of necessity) or shall be found tippling, sporting or gaming, thereby profaning the Lord's day, or first day, shall upon conviction thereof before one justice of the peace forfeit and pay for every such offense six shillings.[7]

This law sets no new precedent in regards to keeping Sunday or "the first day of the week" as the Sabbath, for it based its legal justification for the law on "the ancient law of England," and on the fact that keeping Sunday as the Sabbath was "the practice of the primitive Christians." The Sunday Sabbath was acknowledged at that time to be the practice of all denominations of Christians. This act was revised in 1704, by the Council of New Jersey, by including the prohibition of "drunkenness, cursing, swearing, or breaking the Lord's Day, by doing ordinary work or labor thereon."[8]

Colony of Rhode Island — In 1679, the General Assembly of Rhode Island enacted a law titled, *An act prohibiting Sports and Labor on the First Day of the Week."* It provided:

> That no person or persons within this Colony shall do or exercise any labor or business or work of their ordinary calling, nor use any game, sport, play or recreation on the first day of the week.[9]

7 *American State Papers,* p. 54, citing, *Laws of the Province of New Jersey,* 1664-1702, p. 519.

8 *American State Papers,* p. 55.

9 *Acts and Laws of His Majesty's Colony of Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations in America, 1730,* p. 27.

The General Assembly of Rhode Island Colony, sitting at Newport, on the 2d day of September, 1673, enacted a Sabbath law for the purpose of controlling hired work on Sunday:

> Voted, whereas there hath complaint been made that sundry persons being evil-minded, have presumed to employ in servile labor their servants, and their servants also hire other men's servants and sell them to labor on the first day of the week; for the prevention whereof, be it enacted, that if any person or persons shall employ his servants, or hire and employ any other man's servant and set them to labor, as aforesaid, the person or persons so offending shall pay for every offense five shillings in money.[10]

Various modifications or simple re-enactments of the Rhode Island Sunday laws were made in 1750 and 1784.

New Haven Colony — In 1639 the colonists of New Haven had agreed upon a compact titled, *The Fundamental Agreement of the Colony of New-Haven.* The compact shows that the colonists claimed to take the Bible as their guide in all things. The common law, based upon the Sabbath laws of the Hebrew theocracy, was the accepted authority concerning Sunday. Thus in 1643, they enacted a law which decreed:

> *Profanation of the Lord's-day shall be punished by fine, imprisonment, or corporal punishment; and, if proudly and with a high hand against the authority of God, with death.*[11]

Due to the transactions of certain shipmasters in the harbor on Sunday, the matter of Sunday desecration was rectified in some definite legislation on the matter on January 31, 1647. The act restrained "persons from their ordinary outward employments on any part of the Sabbath."[12] In 1665, the colony of New Haven was united with that of Connecticut.

Colony of Connecticut — In 1650, a general code of laws was established, which contained a proviso that if any person shall "commit burglary or rob on the Lord's Day," he shall have

10 A.H. Lewis, *A Critical History of Sunday Legislation,* pp. 197-98.

11 Wilbur Crafts, *The Sabbath For Man,* (N.Y., 1885), p. 558.

12 *New Haven Colony and Plantation Records, from 1638 to 1649,* p. 358.

a corporeal punishment added to the former punishment.[13] The following statute on the *"Profanation of the Lord's day,"* was typical of many New England Sunday laws:

> Whosoever shall profane the Lord's day or any part of it, either by sinful servile work, or by unlawful sport, recreation, or otherwise, whether willfully or in a careless neglect, shall be duly punished by fine, imprisonment, or corporally, according to the nature and measure of the sin and offense.[14]

This same law was copied and enacted in New Haven colony in 1655. In 1665, a law relative to the attendance of public worship "upon the Lord's day" was passed. On May 19, 1668, the Assembly of the Colony of Connecticut enacted a general law on the Sabbath as follows:

> Whereas, the sanctification of the Sabbath is a matter of great concernment to the weal of a people, and the profanation thereof is that as pulls down the judgments of God upon that place or people that suffer the same: It is therefore ordered by this court and the authority thereof, that if any person shall profane the Sabbath, by any unnecessary travel, or playing thereon in the time of public worship, or shall keep out of the meeting-house during the public worship unnecessarily, he shall pay five shillings for every such offense.[15]

This law was strengthened in an act of 1676, which included the general prohibition that "no servile work shall be done on the Sabbath," that being the Lord's Day. The assembly had again based the purpose for this law on the idea that, "where the Sabbath is profaned," it causes "the procuring of the wrath and judgment of God upon us and our posterity."[16]

Plymouth Colony — When the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth they at once assigned a Lord's Day meeting place which was also their fort. To this fort men, women and children walked every Sunday for worship services. The Plymouth

13 *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut prior to 1665,* p. 514.

14 *American State Papers,* op. cit., p. 42.

15 A. H. Lewis, *A Critical History of Sunday Legislation,* New York: Appleton & Co., 1888, p. 188.

16 Ibid., p. 189.

Colony at first had no apparent need for a Sunday law, as the colony government was based on a rigid common law, founded on the Hebrew theocracy. On June 10, 1650, the general court enacted the following:

> Further, be it enacted, that whosoever shall profane the Lord's day by doing any servile work, or any such like abuses, shall forfeit for every such default ten shillings, or be whipped.[17]

In 1662, a "Sunday Excise Law" was passed which directed that no tavern keepers "shall draw any wine or liquor on the Lord's day," except for relief of the sick.[18] This was updated in 1674 with the following act:

> It is enacted by the court, that as to the restraining of abuses in *ordinaries,* that no ordinary keepers shall sell or give any kind of drink to inhabitants of the town upon the Lord's day.[19]

Later on other laws enacted governed the attendance of church, smoking tobacco on the Lord's day, sleeping or playing about the meeting-house, and disorderly conduct on the Lord's day. In 1691 Plymouth became united to Massachusetts under a new charter, from which time their histories are identical.

Province of Pennsylvania — The early Sabbath laws of Pennsylvania, like its other laws, were made with an intent to preserve religious liberty. But this did not prevent such laws from being enforced. In 1700-01 a general law was passed under William Penn as governor, the substance of which decreed that:

> 1. All general servile work on Sunday was prohibited on pain of twenty shillings fine.
>
> 2. No civil process was servable on Sunday.
>
> 3. Any person found "tippling" in public drinking-houses on Sunday was fined one shilling and six pence. Any dealer who allowed persons to drink and lounge about his premises on Sunday was liable to pay ten shillings fine.[20]

17 *Plymouth Colony Records,* vol. XI, p. 57.

18 Ibid., p. 137.

19 Ibid., p. 236.

20 *Acts of the Assembly of the Province of Pennsylvania,* vol. I, pp. 19-21, folio edition, Philadelphia, 1762.

By the *"Frame of Government"* of 1683, the 20th provision held that if any days referred to in the charter "shall fall upon the first day of the week, commonly called the Lord's day, the business appointed for that day shall be deferred to the next day."[21] On October 14, 1705, the Assembly passed a Sabbath law that was titled, *An Act To Restrain People from Labor on the First Day of the Week.* The act stated:

> To the end that all people within this province may with the greater freedom devote themselves to religious and pious exercises, be it enacted, that according to the example of the primitive Christians, and for the ease of the creation, every first day of the week, commonly called Sunday, all people shall abstain from toil and labor, . . . that they may the better dispose themselves to read and hear the Holy Scriptures of truth at home, and frequent such meetings of religious worship abroad.[22]

This law was repealed in 1794, and replaced with another Sabbath law differing only in a few particulars. There was little, if any, change in the Sunday Sabbath law of Pennsylvania until the mid 20th century.

Massachusetts Bay Colony — The traditional Christian customs and common law formed the basis of the early laws in Massachusetts. The "first general letter" from the governor and deputy of the "Company" in England, dated April 17, 1629, instructed that "*the Sabbath be celebrated in a religious manner.*" On Saturday the people were to make "preparations for the Sabbath."[23] The Sabbath, of course, being on Sunday.

On November 13, 1644, a draft of laws was referred to the "elders" to answer doubts which the civil authorities had as to their validity. The first draft by Mr. Cotton included a law that prohibited "profaning the Lord's day in a careless or scornful neglect or contempt thereof,"[24] which could be punished by

21 F. N. Thorpe, *The Federal & State Constitutions,* (1909) vol. 5, p. 3068.

22 *American State Papers,* p. 47; *Laws of Pennsylvania, 1700-1714,* pp. 35-37.

23 Lewis, *A Critical History of Sunday Legislation,* p. 167-68.

24 Hutchinson, *History of Massachusetts,* vol. I, p. 390.

death. Winthrop retained the law but "left to the discretion of the court to inflict other punishment short of death."

A general court, sitting at Boston, on the 30th of August, 1653, enacted a law to correct "sundry abuses and misdemeanors committed by several persons on the Lord's day." This included disorderly conduct in the streets and frequenting "common houses" and other places to drink, sport, etc., "which things tend much to the dishonor of God, and the profanation of his holy Sabbath."[25] Another general court called by order of the council on August 1, 1665, took notice of the need to regulate "the wicked practices of many persons who do profane God's holy Sabbaths." Three years later on October, 1668, the general court at Boston took up this matter again and passed the following:

> For the better prevention of the breach of the Sabbath, it is enacted by this court and the authority thereof, that no servile work shall be done on that day, viz., such as are not works of piety, of charity, or of necessity; and when other works are done on that day, the persons so doing, upon complaint or presentment, being legally convicted thereof before any magistrate or county court, shall pay for the first offense ten shillings fine, and for every offense after to be doubled.[26]

Other Sunday Sabbath laws for Massachusetts Bay Colony were enacted in 1658, 1667, 1673, 1677 and 1679.

New Netherlands Colony. There was no representative government in what is now New York until nearly a century after the first settlements. The government was administered by officers appointed in Holland. In 1647, Peter Stuyvesant was made leader of the colony. On the arrival of Stuyvesant, the social, civil, and religious affairs of the colony were in a sad state of decline. "Proclamations were immediately issued with a zeal to work a thorough reformation. Sabbath-breaking, brawling and drunkenness were forbidden."[27] In 1691, a

25 *Records of Massachusetts Bay,* vol. iii, p. 316; Lewis, op. cit., p. 169.

26 *Records of Massachusetts Bay,* vol. iv, p. 395; Lewis, op. cit., p. 174.

27 A. H. Lewis, *A Critical History of Sunday Legislation* (1888) p. 200.

representative government was established under the English crown. In October of 1695, the first Sunday law was passed:

> Whereas, the true and sincere worship of God according to his holy will and commandments, is often profaned and neglected by many of the inhabitants and sojourners in this province, who do not keep holy the Lord's day, but in a disorderly manner accustom themselves to travel, laboring, working, . . . and other unlawful exercises and pastimes, upon the Lord's day, to the great scandal of the holy Christian faith, be it enacted, etc.[28]

This preamble was followed by several provisions of the law, such as "six shillings fine for any of the above-named crimes, or any manner of work or play." This law stayed in effect up to the time when the State government was established.

THE SABBATH AND THE LAW OF THE LAND

When jurists want to know what the law is within a written constitution, they go back to those who established and wrote it, the founding fathers of the document, to determine what they had believed, and what they had said and done in regards to the matter at hand. The original intent of these founding fathers determines what the law is. The same is true regarding the founding fathers of this country from 1600 to 1776. They are the ones who formed or established the organic law, our unwritten constitution, whose existence was clearly recognized in the *Declaration of Independence* and other documents and works of the mid-eighteenth century.

Thus the forgoing must be acknowledged as the law of the land in America, just as much as any other fundamental concept that was established by these original "founding fathers" of American law. Courts are bound to uphold fundamental law which was originally established in this land up to the time it became an independent country. The law established and followed up to this time is regarded as the law of the land, and

28 Lewis, op. cit., pp. 200, 201; quoting *Laws of New York from 1691 to 1773,* large folio edition, vol. i, p. 23, 24, New York, 1874.

in America this includes not only the English common law which the settlers claimed as their birthright, but also the laws and principles they established on the land.

This law of the land determines the "constitutionality" or lawfulness of certain governmental acts and statutes just as much as the written constitution does. Thus in a judicial determination on a matter such as Sunday laws and the Sabbath, consideration is to be given to the history of the law on the land.

The following is a chronological record of judicial decisions of cases from American courts involving Sunday laws, the Sabbath, Christianity, and the Lord's Day:

1816 – Massachusetts. The Superior Court held that an arrest made on "the Lord's day," pursuant to a warrant so issued, is illegal, and the officer making it is a trespasser. The Court noted that it is "by the universal consent of Christians" that Sunday is kept as a "holy day." The Court also noted that since the time of the apostles, "the first day of the week was set apart for religious uses."[29]

1817 – Pennsylvania. This case involved a Jew that had been convicted for "a breach of the sabbath," by performing "worldly employment on the Lord's day." The Court said that "persons professing the Jewish religion, and others who keep the seventh day as their sabbath, are liable to the penalty imposed by law for this offense."[30]

1818 – Connecticut. In an action for false imprisonment, a constable had served a legal process on Sunday night. The law prohibited the "service of any civil process on the Lord's day." The case was appealed to question whether the statute, by the word's "*Lord's day,*" means the the *natural* day, or *solar* day. The State Supreme Court held:

29 *Pearce vs. Atwood,* 13 Mass. 324, 346 (1816).

30 *The Commonwealth against Wolf,* 3 Sergeant & Rawle's Rep. 48 (1817). See also *Specht v. Commonwealth,* 8 Penn. State Rep. 312 (1848). A more contemporary court held that "Sunday is the Christians' day of worship and also rest of men irrespective of whether they have a creed or religious belief." *ABC Liquidators, Inc. v. Kansas City,* 322 S.W.2d 876, 880.

> It is a well known rule of the *common law,* that a day comprises twenty-four hours, extending from midnight to midnight, including morning, evening and night, and is called the natural day. When a day is spoken of in law, it comprehends that period of time. . . .the Lord's day extends till midnight. [31]

1834 – Maryland. In a dispute as to whether goods were lawfully delivered pursuant to a contract that required delivery on a Sunday, it was argued that the law was not violated because the statute said "Sabbath," which is a generic term and could refer to any day of rest. The Court of Appeals said that "Sabbath," "the Lord's day," and "Sunday," mean the same day in all Christian communities. It also said:

> The Sabbath is emphatically the day of rest, and the day of rest here is the "Lord's day," or Christian's Sunday. Ours is a Christian community, and a day set apart as the day of rest, is the day consecrated by the resurrection of our Saviour, and embraces the twenty-four hours next ensuing the midnight of Saturday.[32]

Here we also have the recognition of midnight as being the division of the day which marks the time the day starts and ends.

1843 – Alabama. When a party did not keep a contract on Sunday, the other party brought him into court to have the contract enforced. The Court said the contract could not be enforced on Sunday. The reason was stated as follows:

> It [the Sabbath law] was evidently to promote morality and advance the interests of religion, by prohibiting all persons from engaging in their common and ordinary avocations of business, or employment, on Sunday, unless impelled thereto by necessity, or engaged in acts of charity. So far, the law has respect to labor or business which may be either public or private, but it also provides for the higher offence of not only desecrating the Christian sabbath, but also of violating public decency by an open traffic.[33]

31 *Fox against Abel,* 2 Conn. Rep. 541, 542 (1818).

32 *Kilgour vs. Miles and Goldsmith,* 6 Gill & Johnson Rep. 268, 274 (1834). This excerpt was cited by the U.S. Supreme Court in *McGowan v. Maryland,* 366 U.S. 420, 447.

33 *O'Donnell et al v. Sweeney,* 5 Ala 467, 469 (1843).

1848 – South Carolina. A case arose where a Jew had sold merchandise in his shop on Sunday, and charged for violating *"An ordinance for the better observance of the Lord's day."* He claimed that the Sunday law infringed upon his religious rights because he observed Saturday. The Court rejected this and said:

> The Lord's day, the day of the Resurrection, is to us, who are called Christians, the day of rest after finishing a *new creation.* It is the day of the first visible triumph over death, hell and the grave! It was the birth day of the believer in Christ, to whom and through whom it opened up the way which, by repentance and faith, leads unto everlasting life and eternal happiness! On *that day* we rest, and *to us* it is the Sabbath of the Lord—its decent observance, in a Christian community, is *that* which ought to be expected.[34]

The Court also asserted that *"Christianity is part of the common law of the land"* and *"has always been so recognized."*

1848 – Iowa. A motion of error was filed to have a judgment quashed as it was rendered on a Sunday. The court held that the Judgment was not valid by stating:

> The principle is well settled and recognized by all the courts that at common law no judicial acts can be done on Sunday. In this case the final charge to the jury, their verdict, and the judgment, were given and rendered upon the Sabbath day, and being in legal contemplation judicial acts, we can but consider then utterly void.
>
> By all authorities Sunday is represented to be *dies non juridicus.* It was made so in the year 517, by a canon of the church, and adopted as the law of the land by the Saxon kings of England; and having been confirmed by William the Conqueror, and Henry II, was fully established as a part of the common law.[35]

1850 – Arkansas. This case involved an indictment against a George Shover for keeping a grocery store open contrary to law. He claimed the act was unconstitutional and that the keeping of the store open was not criminal *per se.* The Court said:

34 *City Council v. Benjamin,* 2 Strobhart 508, 521 (S.C. 1848).

35 *Davis v. Fish,* 1 Green Rep. 406, 410-11 (Iowa 1848).

> By reserving to every individual the sacred and indefeasible rights of conscience, the convention most certainly did not intend to leave it in his power to do such acts as are evil in themselves and necessarily calculated to bring into contempt the most venerable and sacred institutions of the country. Sunday or the Sabbath is properly and emphatically called the Lord's day, and is one amongst the first and most sacred institutions of the Christian religion. This system of religion is recognized as constituting a part and parcel of the common law, and as such all of the institutions growing out of it, or, in any way, connected with it, are entitled to the most profound respect, and may well be protected by law.[36]

1853 – Pennsylvania. A William Johnston was employed as a driver of an omnibus, and found guilty of driving the bus on Sunday. He claimed that driving the omnibus was not "worldly employment," but was doing "a work of necessity." The Supreme Court up held the conviction and said, "The common law adopted [the Sunday law], along with Christianity, of which it is one of the bulwarks." The Court also said that "a contract of hiring by the month does not, in general, bind the hireling to work on Sundays, for such contract is void."[37]

1854 – Missouri. A Jew named Peter Ambs was indicted for keeping open an ale house on Sunday, and for selling intoxicating liquors on the same day. He challenged the validity of the law as one having religious motives. The Court said:

> Those who question the constitutionality of our Sunday laws, seem to imagine that the constitution is to be regarded as an instrument framed for a state composed of strangers collected from all quarters of the globe, each with a religion of his own, bound by no previous social ties, nor sympathizing in any common reminiscences of the past; . . . that the words in which it is comprehended are alone to be regarded, without respect to the history of the people for whom it was made.
>
> It is apprehended, that such is not the mode by which our organic law is to be interpreted. We must regard the people for whom it was ordained. It appears to have been made by Christian men. The constitution, on its face, shows that the Christian religion was the religion of its framers.[38]

36 *Shover vs. State,* 5 English (10 Ark.) 259, 263 (1850).

37 *Johnston versus The Commonwealth,* 22 Penn. St. 102, 111 (1853).

1856 – Arkansas. Where a man was indicted for violating a statute that prohibited persons from engaging in gambling games "on the Christian Sabbath, or Sunday," the court said:

> The object of the statute was to prohibit the *desecration* of the *Sabbath* by engaging in the vicious employment of playing cards on that day, which is set apart by Divine appointment, as well as by the law of the land.[39]

1858 – Minnesota. An action was brought to question the validity of a Sunday law that prohibited a note to be executed on Sunday. The court held:

> This Sunday act can have no other object than the enforcement of the fourth of God's commandments, which are a recognized and excellent standard of both public and private morals. A violation of the act, therefore, is *contra bonos mores* [against good morals], and cannot be sustained by the courts. No action can be predicated upon a note made on Sunday.

Later this Court again upheld Sunday as a Sabbath or rest day in *State v. Justus,* 98 N.W. 325 (1904).

1861 – New York. A man was indicted for violating the provisions of the "Act to preserve the public peace and order on the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday." It was claimed the act was unconstitutional. The Supreme Court held:

> Every act done maliciously, tending to bring religion into contempt, may be punished at common law; and the Christian sabbath, as one of the institutions of that religion, may be protected from desecration by such laws as may be deemed necessary. The act is clearly *constitutional,* as dealing with and having respect to the sabbath as a civil and political institution. In the State of New York the sabbath exists as a day of rest by the common law, and without the necessity of legislative action to establish it.[40]

38 *State v. Ambs,* 20 Mo. 214, 216 (1854).

39 *Stockden vs. The State,* 18 Ark. 186, 187 (1856).

40 *Lindenmuller v. The People,* 33 Barbour's Rep. 548 (N.Y. 1861). Synopsis of the Court quoted.

1867 – Texas. A Sunday ordinance had been enacted which made it unlawful to have open any bar-room, or sell any spirituous liquors of any kind. The Supreme Court of Texas held that the Sunday ordinance was constitutional, and also said:

> The vast majority of our people profess a belief in the Christian religion, and its existence has been recognized by the constitution framed by them. The followers of that faith have from its earliest existence and foundation regarded and kept Sunday as a day of rest, free from labor and devoted to religious worship. . . And, as a civil regulation, it has been considered important for the physical well-being of society that Sunday be observed as a day of rest from labor, in order that the mind and body may repose, that the former may recover or retain its wonted elasticity and vigor, and the latter may recuperate and be prepared for more arduous and protracted exertions in manual labor. [41]

1871 – Georgia. A Jewish merchant was convicted for a violation of a city ordinance against dealers keeping open doors on Sunday. On appeal, the State Supreme Court said:

> We do not think that the ordinance against dealers keeping open doors on Sunday can be regarded as affecting conscience or enforcing any religious observance. The law fixes the day recognized as the Sabbath day all over Christendom, and that day, by Divine injunction, is to be kept holy—"on it thou shalt do no work." The Christian Sabbath is a civil institution, older than our government, and respected as a day of rest by our Constitution.[42]

1888 – United States. In determining the meaning of a statute that required a writ of error to be filed with the Court within sixty days, "Sundays exclusive," the Court said:

> At common law Sunday was *dies non juridicus*, and no strictly judicial act could be performed upon that day; and this was recognized in the Judiciary Act, which expressly excluded Sundays in the computation of the ten days within which supersedeas could be obtained. 1 Stat. c. 20, § 22-23, p. 84.[43]

41 *Gabel v. City of Houston,* 29 Texas 336, 346 (1867).

42 *Karwisch vs. The Mayor and Council of Atlanta,* 44 Ga. 204, 208 (1871).

43 *Danville v. Brown,* 128 U.S. 503, 505 (1888).

United States – 1891. A case arose which involved a man who was a Seventh Day Adventists. He had been indicted under a Tennessee law for "creating a common nuisance by working on Sunday," by plowing his fields on that day. The man was fined and after he paid the fines He continued to plow on Sunday. His neighbors had him indicted as a common nuisance, for a crime at *common law*. The case came to a Federal Circuit Court which held that there had been proper due process of law in procuring the conviction. The Court also stated the following:

> The courts cannot change that which has been done, however done, by the civil law in favor of the Sunday observance. The religion of Jesus Christ is so interwoven within the texture of our civilization, and every one of its institutions, that it is impossible for any man, or set of men, to live among us, and find exemption from its influences and restraints. Sunday observance is so essentially a part of that religion that it is impossible to rid our laws of it, quite as impossible as to abolish the custom we have of using the English languagc, or clothing ourselves with the garments appropriate to our sex.[44]

1893 – New York. A man in this case was convicted of the "crime of Sabbath breaking." The higher court defined what was the purpose of this law on the Sabbath:

> The Christian Sabbath is one of the civil institutions of the state, and that the legislature for the purpose of promoting the moral and physical well-being of the people, and the peace, quiet and good order of society, has the authority to regulate its observance, and prevent its desecration by any appropriate legislation is unquestioned.[45]

1911 – North Dakota. A provision within the State Constitution was raised against a Sunday law, which provided that, "the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall be forever guaranteed." The Court held that laws prohibiting the doing of certain acts and certain kinds of labor upon the first day of the week, commonly called "Sunday," are not in violation of this provision, as they in no way work an

44 *In re King,* 46 Fed. Rep. 905, 913 (1891).

45 *People v. Moses,* 140 N.Y. Rep. 214, 215 (1893).

establishment of religion. Such Sunday laws were enacted "in recognition of the sacredness of the Christian Sabbath." The Court said that "such laws have been so universally sustained" that they are no longer open to objection.[46]

1930 – Kansas. A law was enacted in this State which made it unlawful for anyone to "sale any goods, wares or merchandise on the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday." The Defendant argued that the law is unconstitutional in that it deprives him of rights guaranteed to him by the State and Federal constitution. The State Constitution guaranteed that, "The right to worship God according to the dictates of conscience shall never be infringed." The court said: "We are unable to see how the statute in question violates this constitutional provision. . . Such statutes are not void because they do not exempt from their operation Seventh Day Adventists or others who worship on some day of the week other than Sunday."[47]

1939 – Georgia. Three persons were charged with pursuing their business or work of their ordinary calling on the Lord's day, to-wit: the operation of a motion picture theatre. Though the net proceeds from the theater on Sunday were turned over to a charity, they were not engaged in "works of charity" as they were paid for their day's work on Sunday the same wages received for any other day's work. The Court also said:

> It is unnecessary that we discuss the propriety of the enactment of the statutes prohibiting a breach of the Sabbath. This is a Christian nation. The observance of Sunday is one of our established customs. It has come down to us from the same Decalogue that prohibited murder, adultery, perjury, and theft. It is more ancient than our common law or our form of government. It is recognized by constitutions and legislative enactments, both State and Federal. The observance of the Sabbath is regarded as essential to the proper upbuilding of the mental and physical, as well as the moral life of a great people.[48]

46 *State ex rel. Temple v. Barnes,* 22 N.D. 18, 132 N.W. 215 (1911).

47 *State v. Haining,* 131 Kan. 853, 855 (1930).

48 *Rogers et al. v. State,* 4 S.E.2d 918, 919 (1939).

1943 – Oklahoma. Certain acts such as servile work, trades, and gaming were made unlawful in the State "on the first day of the week, being by a very general consent set apart for rest and religious uses." The defendant said the law was "class legislation" and thus void. The State Supreme Court stated:

> Keeping open places of business on Sunday, works of necessity and charity excepted, is a public and serious interference with the observance of the day. Such conduct is offensive to the moral sense of the community. It disturbs the peace and good order of society, and invites others to violate the law on the subject. The stability of government, as well as the welfare and interest of society, render it necessary that the day of rest should be uniform, and that its observance should be compulsory. . . The law contemplates . . . the observance of Sunday as a day of rest.[49]

1960-61 – United States. In the 1960-61 session of the United States Supreme Court, four cases were brought to challenge the Sunday laws as being invalid for various reasons. Two of these cases (*Braunfeld v. Brown* and *Gallagher v. Crown Kosher Super Market*) involved Orthodox Jewish Sabbatarian merchants who closed doors on Saturday but opened on Sunday. In all four cases the Sunday laws were upheld. The decisions recognized that Sunday laws "have an unmistakably religious origin." That religion being Christianity. In one case, *McGowan v. Maryland,* much history and documentation was presented in support of the Sunday Sabbath law. Therein it was said:

> Sunday Closing Laws go far back into American history, having been brought to the colonies with a background of English legislation dating to the thirteenth century. . . Almost every State in our country presently has some type of Sunday regulation and over forty posses a relatively comprehensive system.
>
> It would scarcely be asked of a Court, in what professes to be a Christian land, to declare a law unconstitutional because it requires rest from labor on Sunday (except works of necessity and charity), and thereby promotes the cause of Christianity. If the Christian religion is, incidentally or

49 *Ex parte Johnson,* 141 Pac.2d 599, 602 (1943).

otherwise, benefited or fostered by having this day of rest, as it undoubtedly is, there is all the more reason for the enforcement of laws that help to preserve it. Whilst Courts have generally sustained Sunday laws as 'civil regulations,' their decisions will have no less weight if they are shown to be in accordance with divine law as well as human.[50]

This was not the first time the U.S. Supreme Court had heard and upheld Sunday observance laws. The issue was already settled by that Court in 1895, in the case of *Hennington v. Georgia,* 163 U.S. 299.

The preceding then are the historical, legal and judicial proofs that Sunday as the Sabbath is part of the law of the land in America. There is perhaps no other subject which is so deeply and completely grounded in American fundamental law as the Sunday Sabbath concept. And there is perhaps no other subject which has been so universally upheld by the courts for two centuries as the Sunday Sabbath laws.

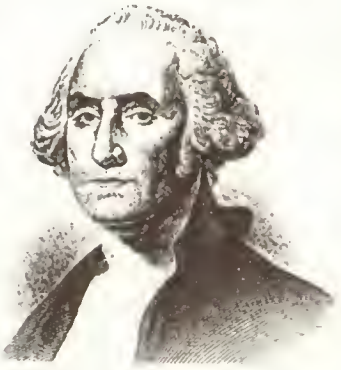
The amazing thing surrounding the Supreme Court's support of Sunday laws during the 1960-61 session, is that it was done under the corrupt "Warren Court," which had been so instrumental in undermining and dismantling so many original and fundamental principles of American law and government. The Sunday laws are so prominently a part of American and Anglo-Saxon history, and so repeatedly upheld, that it was impossible even for that corrupt court to go against them.

Not only did three of the four cases directly involve Jews, but in all four of the cases that came to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1960-61, the Sunday laws were being challenged by Jewish lawyers—Harry Silbert, Sidney Schlacman in the *McGowan* case, Harold E. Kohn and Louis Levinthal in the *Two Guys* case, Marvin Garfinkel and Stephen Narin in the *Braunfeld* case, and Herbert B. Ehrmann and Samuel L. Fein in the *Gallagher* case. There were also many briefs of *amici curiae* filed to persuade

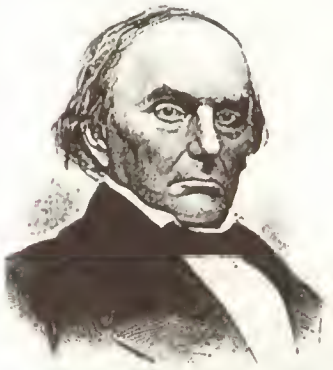
50 *McGowan v. Maryland,* 366 U.S. 420, 431, 435 (1961). Citing in part, *Judefind v. State,* 78 Md. 510, 514, 28 Atl. 405, 406 (1894).

AMERICAN STATESMEN ON THE SABBATH

George Washington — In August, 1776, at the beginning of the Revolutionary War, General Washington, in a general army order, said: "That the troops may have an opportunity of attending public worship, as well as to take some rest after the great fatigue they have gone through, the General, in the future, excuses them from fatigue duty on Sundays. . . We can have little hope of the blessing of heaven on our arms, if we insult it by our impiety and folly."



Washington



Webster

Daniel Webster — "The longer I live the more highly do I estimate the Christian Sabbath, and the more grateful do I feel to those who impress its importance on the community."

President Garfield — On one Sunday morning Garfield said: "This is the Lord's Day. I have a very great reverence for it."

the Court to overturn the Sunday laws. These were all filed by Jews and Jewish organizations such as— Leo Pfeffer, Lewis H. Weinstein, Samuel L. Bennglass for the Synagogue Council of America, Fredrick Greenman, Sol Rabkin for the American Jewish Committee, and Reuben Goodman for the A.C.L.U.

While the enemies of Christianity and the Sunday Sabbath failed in their attempt to eliminate Sunday laws by their centralized plan, they have since that time (1961) made a concerted effort to have such laws repealed at the state level. Yet despite this attempt there were still 41 States in 1980 which had some type of restriction on Sunday activities. But that

number has drastically dropped since and the laws protecting Sunday Sabbath have been virtually repealed out of existence.

Well over a hundred other cases could be presented which would with equal force uphold the Sunday Sabbath as the law of our race and the law of the land. Other evidence within the annals of American and English history could also be cited to show the overwhelming and universal support as a matter of law for the first day of the week as a day of rest or the Sabbath day.

"It has been declared, by the highest legal authorities, that Christianity is part of the law of the land."[51] Consequently, the Christian Sabbath is also a part of the law of the land, and it cannot be rightly or lawfully changed or abrogated for it is legally attached to the land. John Adams once said that it was against the consciences of the people of his State "to make any change in their laws about religion." He declared that they "might as well think they could change the movements of the heavenly bodies as alter the religious laws of Massachusetts."[52]

THE PROBLEM WITH THE SABBATH ISSUE

The foregoing reveals several major problems that have been raised in the various Sabbath arguments. It reveals hypocrisy, inconsistency, and a general ignorance regarding history, law and the ways of God. Let us highlight some of these problems:

Those who claim Saturday is the Sabbath also state that this is a Christian nation. The two positions are grossly incompatible and inconsistent. What do we mean when we say this is a Christian nation? We are saying that the history of this country has significance, that the religion practiced by the settlers and founders means something, and that Christian laws, acts and institutions that were originally established are regarded as a legal precedent. But when we claim that Saturday, the last day of the week, is the Sabbath, we are saying that what happened

51 John Bouvier, *A Law Dictionary,* Vol. I, Boston, 1880, p. 266.

52 Charles F. Adams, *Life and Works of John Adams,* vol. xi, p. 399, 699.

in early America makes no difference, that whatever religion practiced by the founders means nothing, and that we can arbitrarily change the foundational Christian laws and principles that were once a legal precedent.

The "seventh day" advocates will say America was founded by Christian men who followed the Bible and the law of God. Thus when some worldly person in the public scene blasphemes Christ they point to America's founders and show how they outlawed such blasphemy. But by their attachment to the Saturday Sabbath they are saying that such laws mean nothing, because the most prominent Christian law established in America, the Sunday Sabbath, is held as no law at all. So they cannot rightly say government should prevent blasphemy.

The hypocrisy of those who hold to a Saturday Sabbath is all too obvious. They want to have the privilege to pick and choose what fundamental laws, principles and concepts are acceptable to them, and reject those things which do not fit into their own religious or doctrinal beliefs. But when some anti-Christ or humanist arbitrarily chooses to eliminate Bibles and prayer from schools, or promote pornographic art, they yell and scream that our forefathers never allowed such things. In doing so their hypocrisy condemns their position.

If one foundational concept can be rejected, especially one as prominent as the Sunday Sabbath, then all of America's foundational laws and principles can be rejected. In other words, if there is nothing that is legally fixed or established, then there is no unchangeable law of the land. Everything that is foundational can be changed or abolished at any time.

If one supports the Saturday Sabbath, then they have no right to condemn those who would change or destroy American institutions or its common law foundation. If we can reject and abrogate the Sunday Sabbath which is deeply ingrained in the organic law of the land, then the socialists, humanists, liberals and subversives can reject and abrogate the fundamental law on abortion, sodomy, usury, due process of law, racial segregation, lawful money, pornography, search and seizure, or the right to

bear arms. The Saturday Sabbath keepers have in effect given these people the right to reject and abrogate such law. They have established the precedent that fundamental law can be overturned, thus it is hypocritical of them to say someone else cannot do the same in some other area. They have in effect sanctioned the corruption and usurpation that exists in the land.

The Saturday Sabbath keepers will point out those who are subversives and traitors in the land. They condemn those who want to establish new and radical concepts, such as some new police state measure or new taxing scheme, which are foreign and contrary to our American system and to the Anglo-Saxon common law. Yet they want to establish a new Sabbath—the Saturday Sabbath—which is foreign and contrary to our American system and the Anglo-Saxon common law.

It is purely hypocritical for them to complain about some un-American measure that someone wants to establish, when they themselves embrace an un-American concept—the keeping of Saturday as the Sabbath—and want it established in the land.

If the Sabbath is to be on Saturday, sunset to sunset, as many believe to be the command of God, then we have to understand and appreciate the severe problem and predicament we have in America. This means America is a pagan nation, that it is Babylon, and fit to be destroyed. But the notion is wrong. I have never found any fundamental concept of American law that is contrary to the law of God. It was by Divine Providence that Sunday was established here just as other Godly precepts were.

By the claim that the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath, it means that somehow God greatly misguided the colonists by causing Sunday to be held sacred. In other words, Divine Providence works with some things but not with the Sabbath. The inconsistency is all too apparent. What we see here is the Sabbath issue being used by God as test for His people.

Now some may say, "but what about the Fourth Commandment, and what about the seventh day God said to keep?" As we next study into the Bible we will see that the errors continue, and so does the inconsistency and hypocrisy.

3

THE OLD TESTAMENT SABBATH

THE CALENDAR

Before we start into this chapter a few facts on the calendar should be made known. The Israelite or Hebrew calendar consisted of twelve months which were identified by a name or by its number from the first month of the year. The calendar was also built on the concept of the seven-day week. It had 52 seven-day weeks which gave a total number of 364 "calendar" days. But whereas one day (Pentecost) was like a double day consisting of 48 hours, there were actually 365 "solar" days for the year. The days of the month were fixed from year to year and did not move as they do with the present day calendar.

The calendar of the Israelites did not have names for days of the week such as our Monday, Tuesdays, etc. And only in reference to special weekly events or festivals were the days of the week numbered. Dating of events was primarily done by naming the month and the day of the month, not day of the week.

Thus the calendar used by the Israelites had the basic components of the calendar in use today. It had seven days in one week, 12 months in a year, and 365 days for a year. The calendar in use today is based upon the "Julian" calendar, which was introduced by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C., and consisted of 365.25 days in the year. In 1582, Pope Gregory III appointed a commission of astronomers and mathematicians to reform the Julian calendar by improving the leap-year system, so that it would more closely conform to the true solar year of 365.2422 days. When instituted on October 4, ten days had to be dropped, so that the next day was October 15. Because of this reform the calendar is usually called the "Gregorian" calendar.

THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE WEEK FALLACY

The controversy over which day of the week the Sabbath is to be on is based upon what many believe the Bible says about the Sabbath and the phrases used to instruct its observance. The confusion and misunderstanding centers around the terms, "sabbath," "week," and "seventh day." Some of the sabbath commands in the Old Testament are as follows:

> Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day you shalt rest (**Exodus 23:12**).
>
> Six days shall you labor, and do all your work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it you shall not do any work. (**Exod. 20:9-10; Deut. 5:14**).
>
> Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation (**Leviticus 23:3**).

The meaning of the term "the seventh day" as used in such verses has often been understood to mean the seventh day of the week. Thus there has been much effort and argument directed at assigning the Sabbath to Saturday. To support this concept its adherents often use the terms *seventh day* and *sabbath* interchangeably as though they are synonymous terms. Thus many Saturday Sabbath keepers will say "we keep the seventh day" with the same meaning as "we keep the Sabbath."

But what is being conveyed in these verses is merely a numbering cycle consisting of six working days and one day of rest. If we say that the fiftieth year is the Jubilee, the term "fiftieth year" does not mean "Jubilee," or any specific event, it only conveys the concept of a numbering cycle. Likewise "seventh day" is not synonymous with "sabbath," nor does it mean a specific calendar day. It refers only to a numbering scheme which involves the Sabbath.

Further, the word "sabbath" does not mean seven or seventh day, nor does it carry any connotation of the number seven or any day of the week. The word 'sabbath' comes from the Hebrew word **shabath** and is defined as follows:

- *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, vol. 3, p. 311, says, "The root means to cease, desist and to "interrupt."
- *Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*, #7676, says the word shabath is from #7673 which means "intermission," and "desist."
- *Young's Analytical Concordance*, in his Lexicon to the Old Testament, shows the use of shabath infers: to "cease, celebrate, keep, rest, or cause to cease."
- *Gesenius Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament* says the root word means, "to take rest. The primary idea appears to be that of to sit down, to sit still."

Sabbath basically means to rest or cease, it does not mean seven or seventh day. Yet many that hold that Saturday is the Sabbath, speak of "the Seventh Day" as the Sabbath, or use Sabbath to mean the seventh day. If you keep the sabbath you rest at a certain time, which according to the Bible is the day after working for six. This is the essence of the meaning of the sabbath commands. So there is nothing septenary (a group of seven) about the meaning of sabbath, as it needs a number along with it to tell how long the interval of time for the rest will be.

Another reason many have incorrectly construed the sabbath commands to mean the seventh day of the week, is because they wrongly inject the word "week" in these verses. The Hebrew word for "week" is **shabua** (*shaw-boo'-ah*), which literally means "*sevened*, i.e., a *week*."[1] The word and its meaning is equivalent to our word and meaning for "week." Thus the ancient Israelites had a term for week, they even had a "Feast of Weeks." But in all the commands relating to the weekly Sabbath, we never find the word **shabua** (week) used. Only in a couple of verses which speak of a festival sabbath is any reference or connection to a week ever given.

While there is no indication of a week or reference to a numbered day of a week in the Sabbath commands, many seem to subconsciously insert the word "week" or "of the week" in such verses after the words "seventh day." They thus have

1 *Strong's Concordance*, O.T. #7620

erroneously concluded that the Bible speaks of the Sabbath on the "seventh day of the week." **But no where in the Old Testament does it say that the Sabbath was on the seventh day of the week.** Nor is such a concept to be derived from any implied construction or deductive analysis of related biblical data and information. If God meant that the Sabbath was to be on the seventh day of the week, or the last day of the week, would He not have specified it as such?

The vernacular in which the Sabbath command is spoken simply conveys a succession of days. The wording does not relate to a starting point on the calendar from which either the six days of work are to commence, or where the Sabbath is to fall in the week. This fact is even recognized by the *Jewish Encyclopedia:*

> Six days of labor are prescribed as clearly in the Sabbath law as is the one day of rest; both must be religiously observed, which is impossible under present conditions. Furthermore, the phraseology of the commandment does not fix the six days; the definite article before "seventh" implies merely that the day referred to is that following any group of six consecutive days; the phrase "the seventh day" is found only in the Paschal law (Deut. 16:8) where it is evident that no fixed day of the week is intended.[2]

This is an unusual admission made by those who religiously keep Saturday or the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath.

The Saturday keepers seem to believe that because Saturday is the seventh day of the week on the Gregorian calendar, it is also the "seventh day" spoken of in the Bible. But the statement made in the quote above is quite true. The article "the" found in the command — "Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest" (Lev 23:3), does not indicate a specific day in the week or any day on the calendar.* Yet the "seventh day" advocates tenaciously keep Saturday, as though God had decreed: "Thou shall keep the seventh day of the week on the Gregorian calendar."

2 *The Jewish Encyclopedia,* vol. 10, New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1905, 1916, p. 604.

* The term "seventh day" may have logically meant the seventh day after the giving of the sabbath law.

Moses had used the phrase "seventh day" many times when he clearly was not speaking of the Sabbath or any specific day of the week. For instance in Leviticus 13 we find the following:

> 4 If the bright spot be white in the skin of his flesh, and in sight be not deeper than the skin, and the hair thereof be not turned white; then the priest shall isolate him that has the plague seven days:
>
> 5 And the priest shall look on him the seventh day: and, behold, if the plague in his sight be at a stay, and the plague spread not in the skin; then the priest shall isolate him seven days more.[3]

Does this mean that the priest is to look on the diseased person spoken of on the seventh day of the week, or of the month? It would be quite erroneous to say it does, and it would be even more erroneous to say that this means Saturday on our calendar! It only means the seventh day from the day the priest would "isolate" or quarantine him. It refers only to a counting sequence as it does in the Sabbath commands.

In Numbers 6:7, Moses says that "if a man dies very suddenly," then the Nazarite involved with the death was to "shave his head on the seventh day." Did Moses mean this was to happen on Saturday? Obviously the man could have died on any day of the week. If he died on our Wednesday, then the "seventh day" would be Tuesday in which this command to shave the head is to be carried out.

In Numbers chapter 19, we have God giving to Aaron and Moses certain ordinances regarding purification and separation which they and the people were to follow. One ordinance on purification states:

> 11 He that touches the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.
>
> 12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean.[4]

3 Leviticus 13:4-5. Also see verses 6, 27, 32; Lev. 14:9, 39-42.

4 Numbers 19:11-12. Also see Numbers 31:19.

Here we have reference to two different days — "the third day" and "the seventh day." The days are not those of the week or of any day of the month. They indicate only the days that follow an event that is to occur — in this case the day in which the dead body was touched. Since the dead body could be touched on any day of the week or any day of the month, the phrases, "the third day" and "the seventh day" are not attached to the calendar in any way. Likewise, the Sabbath on the seventh day refers only to the day after a certain event — the working of six days. Thus the wording itself does not attach the day to the calendar. The context of the commands is given in the same way as the third day and seventh day are spoken of in the above verses. It is merely a numbing or counting scheme.

When Jesus said that He would rise on "the third day," did He and the Apostles mean Tuesday, since that is the third day of the week? No, He meant the third day in counting after His death. Yet it is plausible that a religious denomination could be based on this mistaken idea. They would be called "Third Day" observers of the Resurrection, and would observe Tuesday (the third day) instead of the first day as such because Tuesday is the third day of our week. But we should see the obvious flaw in such thinking, and likwise see that in the Sabbath commands God meant only the seventh day in counting after six work days. We have no authority to add to Scripture what is not there, and God never said "week" in giving the Sabbath.

In reading a medical text you might read that a woman shall be pregnant for nine months, and in the ninth month will give birth. Does this mean all woman are to give birth in September since that is "the ninth month" on our calendar? No it does not. The "ninth month" is only a relative number based on the time after conception and is not fixed to a calendar. If we bought a machine and the manufacture's instructions said: *"You can run this machine for only six days, and on the seventh day you must stop it and give it a rest."* Certainly no one would think we must stop the machine on Saturday. As long as we didn't run the machine longer than six days, then the stopping of it on any day of the week would adhere to the instructions.

There are many other illustrations in the Bible where phrases such as "the seventh day," or "the twelfth day" or some numbered day is used which have no bearing on or relation to a day of the week or a month.[5] Yet there are such phrases which do point to a specific date and they are clearly distinguished from those that do not. The following is one example:

> And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem.[6]

Here the phrase "the seventh day" has reference to a specific day on the calendar. The term doesn't mean the day that happens to be the number seven after the occurrence of some event. It means specifically the seventh day of the month of Ethanim, which is the seventh month.

An additional problem we must keep in mind with the Sabbath issue is the fact that the Gregorian calendar is structured differently than the Hebrew calendar. In the Gregorian calendar the days of the month move around every year, but in the Hebrew calendar they are fixed year after year. The calendars simply do not line up with one another. However, both calendars had seven day weeks, and the Sabbath on the Hebrew calendar did occur on a specific day in the weekly cycle.

THE TRUE HEBREW SABBATH DAY

Since the commands to keep the Sabbath have no directives as to the actual day they were to be held on the calendar, and have no starting date as to the six days of work, the Sabbath days on the Hebrew calendar have to be derived at by some other means. The Sabbaths would have fallen on fixed dates of the year since the days of the month were fixed and did not change year after year. These Sabbaths would also fall on fixed days of each of the 52 seven-day weeks on that calendar.

5 See Judges 14:17, 18; Num. 31:19, 24; 2 Sam. 12:18; 1 Kings 20:29.

6 II Kings 25:8.

When we examine the Biblical information surrounding the Israelite months, feast days, and sabbaths, we find God had given Israel a calendar, or at least conditions by which a calendar is to be based upon. God had done this at the time of the Exodus, yet the concepts of year, month, week and day had already long existed.

At the Exodus God had given Israel certain instructions as to the make-up of the calendar. God started the Israelite calendar with the month in which the Passover and Exodus occurred:

> And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,
>
> This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.[7]

This was spoken to Moses and Aaron on Passover night, and that night and the next day they would leave Egypt. These days were to be special days in the first month of the calendar month. They were special days by which the people were to remember the Passover and the Exodus. Later Moses reminded Israel of this time and date:

> And Moses said to the people, Remember this day, in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; . . . This day came you out in the month Abib.[8]
>
> Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought you forth out of Egypt by night.[9]

Abib was the name for the first month of Israel's calendar, and thus Abib 1st was the first day of the year. It was Israel's "New Years Day." Abib 1st was not only the start of the Year and the first month, but was also the start of the first week of the calendar. Thus Abib 1st was the first day of the week, and Abib 7th was the last day or seventh day of the first week. Some writers have unexplainably place Abib 1st on the calendar as the last day of the week. But how can Abib 1st be the last

7 Exodus 12:2.

8 Exodus 13:3-4. See also Exodus 23:15; 34:18.

9 Deuteronomy 16:1.

day of the week when there were not yet any days of the week or month? This is as justified as placing Abib 1st at the end of the month. God started the first week on the first day of the week, not the last. The second week started on Abib 8th, the third week started on Abib 15th, and so on for 52 weeks, then it started over with week one on Abib 1st of the next year.

Abib 1st was also a special day in which certain religious practices and acts of cleansing and sanctifying the house of God were performed:

> And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. **(Exodus 40:1-2)**.
>
> And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up **(Exodus 40:17)**.
>
> Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the LORD: so they sanctified the house of the LORD in eight days; and in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end **(2 Chronicles 29:16-17)**.

So Abib 1st, New Years Day, was a very special day in the Hebrew calendar. It also appears it was the first official Sabbath day in Israel, being a day of sanctification of the house of God, and a day of the setting up of the tabernacle. If Abib 1st was a Sabbath day, then the next Sabbaths in the seven day weekly cycle would be Abib 8th, Abib 15th, and Abib 22nd—all being the first day of the week. Thus in the above verse the "eighth day" of the month refers to the first day of the second week.

This is verified by the days in which the festival sabbaths occurred in the week. In Leviticus 23 there is a long list of feasts and sabbaths which God is commanding Moses to give to the people. God starts by giving the general Sabbath command:

> 3 Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, and holy convocation; you shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings **(Leviticus 23:3)**.

Next God assigns specific dates of the calendar to the various feasts and sabbaths. In the commands we find that Abib 15th is to be regarded as a Sabbath:

> 5 In the fourteenth day of the first month [Abib] at even is the LORD's passover.
>
> 6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month [Abib] is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days you must eat unleavened bread.
>
> 7 In the first day you shall have an holy convocation; you shall do no servile work therein.
>
> 8 But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: you shall do no servile work therein.[10]

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was thus a feast lasting for "seven days" or one week, and is spoken of as a seven day weekly event. It occurred during the third week in the Hebrew calendar and it started on Abib 15th. The "first day" of this week was to be a Sabbath or *"an holy convocation"* in which *"you shall do no servile work therein."* This was also a regular weekly Sabbath. The "seventh day" of this week was also a Sabbath day and a feast day (Exod. 13:6). This is the only time in the Hebrew calendar in which a Sabbath or rest day falls on the seventh or last day of the week. *All of the weekly sabbaths are on the first day of the week, not the seventh day of the week.*

The phrases "the first day" and "the seventh day" used in the command of the Feast of Unleavened Bread are obviously not in reference to days of the month. Rather, they are made in reference to this one festival period or week, and thus they also refer to specific days in the week. This shows that Israel had weeks with a first day and a seventh day. If not, the command would have been stated as having an holy convocation on the 15th day and the 21st day of the month, which are the first day and the seventh day of the third week. In Exodus 12:18 it says that the eating of unleavened bread was to continue

10 Leviticus 23:5-8. These verses are repeated in Numbers 28:16-25 and also in Exodus 12:15-20.

"until the one and twentieth day of the month." This was another way of saying the "seventh day" of the weekly feast.

The Passover was on Abib 14th, and the 15th was the celebration of the Exodus from Egypt. In Numbers 33 Moses wrote down the "journeys" of Israel regarding these days as God commanded him:

> 3 And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

The book of Exodus also makes reference to "the time of the month of Abib" in which Israel "camest out of Egypt."[11] It appears more emphasis is place on the Exodus than the Passover. The Passover was *not* a day of "holy convocation" but was a labor day. It fell on the seventh day of the second week or the 14th of Abib. The 15th of Abib was to be a *"holy convocation."* It was a *Sabbath day* and was also the *"first day"* of the third week on the calendar:

> And in the fourteenth day of the first month is the passover of the LORD.
>
> And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten.
>
> In the first day shall be an holy convocation; you shall do no manner of servile work therein (**Numbers 28:16-18**).

Another type of feast day which God declared as a Sabbath day, and which also fell on a regular weekly sabbath, was the "Feast of Weeks." God had told Israel to keep seven sabbaths for seven weeks (totaling 49 days), starting from the day after the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The 49th and 50th day would both be a sabbath day. It thus is much like the Jubilee cycle. The following verses are one of the commands regarding this feast:

> And you shall count to you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:

11 Exodus 23:15; 34:18.

ABIB (1)					ZIF (2)					3rd MONTH				
1 ★	8	15 U	22 S	29		6	13	20	27	4/5 W	12	19	26	
2	9	16 ✣	23	30		7	14	21	28	6	13	20	27	
3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29	7	14	21	28	
4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30	8	15	22	29	
5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24		1	9	16	23	30
6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25		2	10	17	24	
7	14 P	21 E	28		5	12	19	26		3	11	18	25	

4th MONTH					5th MONTH					6th MONTH				
	3	10	17	24	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	
	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28	
	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29
	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30
	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	(1) X
1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25	(2) X
2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26	(3) X

ETHANIM (7)					BUL (8)					9th MONTH				
1 ♥	8	15 T	22	29		6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25	
2	9	16	23	30		7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	
3	10 A	17	24		1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	
4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28	
5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29
6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30
7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	

10th MONTH					11th MONTH					12th MONTH				
	2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	
	3	10	17	24	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	
	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28	
	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29
	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30
	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	(4) X
1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25	(5) X

The Hebrew Calendar

Key to Hebrew Calendar

- ☐ = Shaded boxes are all weekly sabbaths.
- ★ = New Years Day – First day of the year, first day of the first month, first day of the first week. A sabbath day.
- P = Passover. A labor day.
- U = Beginning of Feast of Unleavened Bread. A sabbath day.
- ✣ = Wave Offering. A labor day.
- E = End of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. A sabbath day.
- S = First Sabbath of seven consecutive weekly sabbaths.
- W = Feast of Weeks or Pentecost (49th & 50th day). A double sabbath of 48 hours (4th & 5th of the month).
- ♥ = Feast of Blowing of Trumpets. First day of the civil year. A sabbath day
- A = Day of Atonement. A sabbath day.
- T = Beginning of Feast of Tabernacles. A sabbath day.
- X = Intercalary days added – five total.

> Even to the morrow after the seventh sabbath you shall number fifty days; and you shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD (**Leviticus 23:15-16**).

The morrow after the sabbath was the day after Abib 15th, which was Abib 16th on the Hebrew calendar. This was the day of the Wave Offering. We are to start counting from this day, the sixth day would be Abib 21st, and the seventh day (the Sabbath) would be Abib 22nd, which is on the first day of the week. This would be the first sabbath in the *Feast of Weeks*. From Abib 16 we are to count "fifty days" which would contain seven weeks with seven sabbaths:

> Seven weeks shall you number to yourselves; begin to number [or count] the seven weeks from such time as you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. (**Deuteronomy 16:9**).

The seven sabbaths of the Feast of Weeks all fell on the regular weekly sabbath days, which would be Abib 22, 29, Zif 6, 13, 20, 27, and the 4th day of the third month. This 4th day of the third month is the 49th day after the wave offering on Abib 16th, and is the 6th Sabbath after that date. The 5th day of the third month is called Pentecost day, meaning the 50th day after the wave sheaf offering. This day was the seventh sabbath of the feast which created a double or two day sabbath.

Since there were two sabbath days in this one week we have in effect an eight day week, but this double sabbth day was followed by six work days. To keep God's command, *"six says shall you work, but on the seventh day you shall rest"* (Exod. 34:21), there must be a sabbath after these six work days. This makes the 12th day of the third month a Sabbath day, which again is the first day of the week.

The next mention of a Sabbath in the Hebrew calendar was in the 7th month which was called Ethanim. The beginning of this month mark the time of harvest, and was regarded as the start of the civil year.[12] Thus this month also started on the beginning of a week—the first day of the civil year. This day was a feast day and a Sabbath day:

> 23 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying.
>
> 24 Speak to the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall you have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation
>
> 25 You shall do no servile work therein. (**Leviticus 23:23-25**).

The first day of the seventh month, which was a Sabbath, was the first day of the week. It was also a special day called the Feast of Trumpets.

> And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have an holy convocation; you shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets to you (**Numbers 29:1**).

This first day of the seventh month was also kept as a special holy day in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, as it was declared to be a day "holy unto the LORD."[13] But neither the Feast day nor the Sabbath is mentioned, as it seems they had the sabbath on a different day as derived from Babylon.

The next day that was regarded as a Sabbath or rest day was the 10th day of the seventh month. This day was called the Day of Atonement:

12 Abib was more properly the beginning of the ecclesiastical year upon which the festivals were based. The latter books of the Old Testament put greater emphasis on Ethanim 1st as the beginning of the year.

13 Nehemiah 8:2, 9, 10

> 26 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
>
> 27 Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be a holy convocation to you, and you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD (**Leviticus 23:26-27**).[14]

On the Day of Atonement the people were commanded to "do no work at all" (Leviticus 16:29). It was thus a rest day, and as it fell on the 3rd day of the week, it is the only Sabbath day in the middle of a week.

Another specified Sabbath day was on the 15th day of the seventh month. This was also a weekly Sabbath day, and like all weekly Sabbaths was on the first day of the week. This day begins the Feast of Tabernacles, which is a seven day feast, and then the eighth day is again a Sabbath day which is the first day of the next week. The command for this is as follows:

> 33 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
>
> 34 Speak to the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days to the LORD.
>
> 35 On the first day shall be a holy convocation: you shall do no servile work therein.
>
> 36 Seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD: on the eighth day shall be a holy convocation to you; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD; it is a solemn assembly; and you shall do no servile work therein.[15]

Verse 39 states that "the first day" and "the eight day" shall be "a sabbath." The seven days in which this feast took place where one week of the Hebrew calendar. Thus the "first day" spoken of is the first day of that *festival week* and was a sabbath day. The "eighth day" was the day after the seven days of the festival week and thus was the first day of the next week which was again a sabbath day—"a holy convocation." A 'holy convocation' refers to a religious celebration and assembly.

14 See also Leviticus 25:9; Numbers 29:7.

15 Leviticus 23:33-36. Also: Numbers 29:12, 35.

Thus when we look at the Hebrew calendar we see that all the Sabbaths are lined up in a row every seven days. When God gave Israel its calendar He started it with a Sabbath, and a Sabbath followed every seven days thereafter. Thus the Sabbath was technically on the start or beginning of the seven-day weekly cycle. The Sabbath cycle was keyed off of the start of the year— the New Years day. Since the first day of the "sacred year" (Abib), and the first day of the "civil year" (Ethanim), were the first day of the first week, **all the weekly Sabbaths were on the first day of the week, not the seventh or the last day of the week.**

While many researches and writers on the subject of calendars and sabbaths have revealed this fact in their work, practically none of them have specifically pointed it out. Most have been so brainwashed with the "seventh day" doctrine that they cannot objectively interpret the facts. Their conditioning and subconscious nature always has them inserting the word "week" where it does not exist.

The fact that all the weekly Sabbaths line up at the beginning of the Hebrew weeks is not by chance or coincidence. Some may say that these are only special Sabbaths, and not the weekly Sabbaths. God had laid out the dates of the month in which these Sabbaths would fall so they would coincide with the weekly sabbath cycle. This was for consistency with the sabbath and work cycles. God obviously meant for this to be a pattern for us to know beyond doubt when his true weekly Sabbaths actually occurred. There were thirteen different commanded "special" Sabbaths which all fell on regular weekly Sabbaths every year. There were two other commanded Sabbaths (Abib 21st and Ethanim 10th) which fell during the middle and end of the week, and thus not on the first day of the week.

The days of the month on the Hebrew calendar were fixed and did not move as they do in our calendar. Thus the Hebrew Sabbaths fell on certain fixed dates of the month every year. The Sabbaths therefore could not be made to line up with the days and weeks of the Gregorian calendar. The Hebrew

calendar started on the Vernal Equinox, our March 20th, and the civil year began on our September 20th.

There thus is no way that one can pick out certain aspects of the Hebrew Sabbath, or quote a few Old Testament verses, and conclude that the Sabbath on the Gregorian calendar is Saturday or Sunday or any other day. The calendars simply are not compatible or interchangeable.

Israel of old did not keep a Saturday Sabbath because they did not have the Gregorian calendar. The Jewish calendar is of no value in determining the Old Testament Sabbath as it is not the original Hebrew calendar. It is based on a Babylonian system and names. With the Sabbath issue the primary question is not what day to follow, but what calendar to follow. The calendar will ultimately dictate what the Sabbath day will be. Even if God said "the seventh day of the week," as some erroneously think, He did not give Israel the Gregorian calendar.

There thus are only two plausible arguments in regards to which day shall be the Sabbath. We must either accept the present Julian-Gregorian calendar style with its weekdays, movable dates of the year, and Sunday Sabbath; or we must accept the old Hebrew calendar with its fixed dates of the year and its assigned Feast days and Sabbaths. It must be one or the other in total to avoid inconsistencies, erroneous ideas, and hypocrisy. Thus if one wants to follow the Israelite Sabbath as originally given, they cannot cling onto the Gregorian calendar at the same time. To do so makes one a hypocrite.

The term "seventh day" has indeed misled and fooled many, just as the word "Jew" has misled many. But it is too clear that the "seventh day" does not mean Saturday or last day of the week, just as the word "Jew" does not mean Israelite. Many have gone with the apparent meaning of such words and have effectively changed God's word. The Seventh Day Adventists make a big deal about not changing the words of Scripture, yet ironically they are the ones who have changed Scripture by adding the words "of the week" where they never belonged.

4

THE SABBATH IN THE POST-EXILIC PERIOD

ADOPTING BABYLONIAN WAYS

One of the keys needed to unravel the truth of the Sabbath question is to understand the state of things surrounding Israel's captivity by Babylon and the return of a remnant back to Judea from their Exile. The exilic and post-exilic periods in the history of these people mark a significant change in the laws, customs and way of doing things, as well as their relationship with God. The Exile thus brought about a most significant change in the life and history of these people.

With the return of the captives to Jerusalem, we begin to see a noticeable change in the formalities of the Sabbath and in the way it is regarded by the people. These people had been subject to 70 years of Babylonian conditioning and indoctrination during their captivity, and a mind set formed which was passed down from generation to generation. It was these people who Jesus was constantly at odds with, and one of the main areas of contention was the sabbath issue.

Many of the religious practices and beliefs of these Judeans had a definite Babylonian slant to them. The economic and political affairs of the land were also tainted with various Babylonian principles. What we thus see in this period is a Hebrew culture with an intertwining of Babylonian concepts.

It thus is not surprising to see that during this time all of the Hebrew names for the months on the calendar were changed to Babylonian names! This shows how strong the influence of Babylonian culture was on these people.

The Change in the Names of the Hebrew Months	
Hebrew Name	Babylonian Name
Abib	Nisan
Zif	Iyar
Third Month	Sivan
Fifth Month	Ab
Bul	Marcheshvan
Ethanim	Tishri
12th Month	Adar

In the post-exilic period the Assyro-Babylonian calendar was apparently introduced with its order and name of months, and its lunar aspects. Many aspects of the Babylonian calendar became part of the calendar in the land of Palestine after the return of the remnant of Judah from the Exile.

> The beginning of the year of the old Hebrew calendar before the Exile was reckoned with the autumn, a natural and convenient season, since the whole product of the fields and vineyards was gathered in; but after the Exile, the spring equinox was substituted, following the Babylonian custom, along with the adoption of its names of the months.[1]

Prof. Langdon reveals that, "the name of the fifth Jewish month Ab, was borrowed from the Babylonian Abu." Indeed much of what the Judahites picked up from Babylonia was somewhat changed or modified, and thus the influence is obvious as Prof. Langdon points out:

> Obviously the Jews in exile in Babylonia knew the calendars of the temples there; they knew the myths of the months. So effective was the influence of Babylonia upon them that they abandoned their own names for the months and accepted the Babylonian names. . . .The myth and cult of each great monthly festival were indicated in most cases by the name of the month. Ab was the festival of burning fires for the midsummer sun, and the word itself conveyed this sense. . . . When the Jews borrowed the word Ab for the fifth month

1 *A New Standard Bible Dictionary,* edited by M. Jacobus & E. Lane, New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1936, p. 907-08.

> they must have known what the word meant. Somehow this knowledge was never passed on to their descendants.[2]

There thus was a permanent influence of Babylonian culture on the remnant of Judah that returned to Judea. These people were so Babylonianized that they lost track of their own heritage, culture and law (Neh. 8:13-14; 13:1). They had mixed with all sorts of heathen people, including Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites and Amorites (Ezra 9:1-2). Although Ezra and some of the priests were re-educating these people, they still retained much of what they lived under in Babylon. Those ideologies, beliefs, customs and laws became engrafted upon the Hebrew culture and law. After several centuries of isolation from any prophets or judges sent by God, a system arose which was a compound of Hebrew and Babylonian law and culture, and which we best identify today as Phariseeism and Talmudism. By the time Christ walked the land, the calendar, the Sabbath, and the law had taken deep root in Babylonian culture.

> The history of the sabbath in Israelite religious practice in the pre-exilic period is fully confirmed by other, extra-Pentateuchal references to it. . . . Already in the early post-exilic period, as has been noted, and perhaps beginning even during the Exile, a transition of the character of the sabbath set in.[3]

> During the Babylonian exile the Jews began to drift away from their national institutions, including the Sabbath.[4]

With the return of the Babylonian captives to Judea, a noted change had occurred in the Sabbath. A change derived from the Babylonian religion. Just as there was a change in names of the month and the start of the civil year, the Sabbath day too was affected. It is well documented by hundreds of historians that the state religion of Assyria and Babylon had a mandatory seventh day sabbath. The basic concept was a counterfeit of the Hebrew sabbath, but was significantly different in nature.

2 S. Langdon, M.A., *Babylonian Menologies and the Semitic Calendars,* London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1933, pp. 21-22.

3 *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,* vol. 4, (Nashville, 1962) pp. 138-39.

4 Nathan Barack, *A History of the Sabbath,* New York: Jonathan David Pub., 1965, p. 13.

The concept of the seventh or last day of the week for the Sabbath is of Babylonian origin, not Hebrew. The Babylonian calendar was based upon the worshiped the moon god. It thus was primarily a lunar type of calendar.

> The month in Babylonia was a lunar month, and the year was a lunisolar year. . . . As in all lunar calendars the month began with the visible new moon.[5]

The *Jewish Encyclopedia,* in speaking on the principles regulating the Jewish Calendar, says that, "The first appearance of the new moon determines the beginning of the month."[6] Israel of old would have reckoned a new month as we do today—by the calendar—the position of the moon would be irrelevant. The term "new moon" in the Bible should have been translated "new month" (*chodesh* – #2320), since "moon" was a different word (*yareach* – #3391, 3394). The "new moon" or month was only a feast day (Psa. 81:3) and not a lunar event.

Prof. Langdon says the lunar month of the Babylonian and Jewish calendars started at "the period from the moon's first appearance after sunset to its disappearance on the morning of the 28th day." The lunar month was also divided by "a *septem* principle" which was "based upon rest days 7, 14, 19, 21, 28."[7] This numbering sequence is often found in Babylonian writings. The Babylonian days of rest fell on the seventh day of each seven day cycle period in the month, or the seventh day of their week.

> The Babylonians, like all other peoples of the ancient East, based their calculations of time on the moon. It follows, therefore, that the seven-day periods described in the Rawlinson calendar were also reckoned from the visible new moon; indeed, this fact is clearly indicated by the description applied in that calendar to the first day of the month.[8]

When the moon first appeared the new month started as did a new "seven-day period" or week. The Babylonian Sabbath

5 Hutton Webster, *Rest Days,* N.Y., MacMillan Co., 1916, p. 226.

6 *The Jewish Encyclopedia,* vol. III, (1903), p. 502.

7 Langdon, *Babylonian Menologies & Semitic Calendars,* pp. 10-11, 73.

8 Webster, op. cit., pp. 227, 228.

or rest day did not occur on the first day of this period or week, but on the last or seventh day, and again on the fourteenth day. Speaking on the Assyro-Babylonian calendar Dr. Webster says:

> A similar association with the moon's course is set forth in the case of a seven-day period in a text which specifically indicates the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth days as those of Sin, the moon-god. . . The cuneiform evidence thus makes it reasonably certain that the cycles of seven days' duration found in the Rawlinson calendar were regarded as divisions of the lunar month.[9]

The lunar cycles were seven days each with four cycles or weeks in each month. When the month started with the new moon, the first lunar cycle was days 1 to 7, with day 7 being the sabbath or rest day. The second lunar cycle (week) was days 8 to 14, with the 14th being a rest day, and so on. One reason why the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th days of the lunar month were singled out is that they were regarded as "days of ill omen,"[10] Babylonian records show the number 7 was regarded as evil, unlucky, a source of ill fortune, and therefore to be avoided:

> Among the Babylonians the evil spirits were likewise seven in number. . . .All this suggests quite compellingly that this seventh and final day of the week was regarded quite generally by them [Babylonians]. . . as an evil day, a day controlled by evil spirits, a day therefore upon which human labor would certainly not prosper.[11]

From the cuneiform records we find that these "evil days" were called the day of *shabattu,* which has generally been accepted as the phonetic equivalent of the Hebrew *shabbath* or Sabbath, referring to a Sabbath of particular solemnity.[12] Prof. Langdon says that "the Babylonian word *sabattu*" refers to "the 7th day of each lunar cycle."[13] The Babylonian Sabbath was always on the 7th day of the week. Some scholars also connect

9 Hutton Webster, *Rest Days,* p. 228, 229.

10 Barack, op. cit., p. 8;

11 *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,* vol. 4, (1962) p. 136, 137.

12 Webster, op. cit., pp. 235.

13 S. Langdon, *Babylonian Menologies & Semitic Calendars,* p. 92.

this word to a rest used by the Babylonian gods, as a time for "refraining from or cessation of divine anger."[14] But it is certain that the Babylonian *'shabattu'* or rest day was connected with, and determined by the phases of the moon. With four seven-day lunar periods in the month, there were each month four *shabattu* or rest days. On those days the people and king were not to do certain acts:

> In the Babylonian records we find that the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th days of the month, were days on which certain things were forbidden to the King.[15]

1	8	15	22
2	9	16	23
3	10	17	24
4	11	18	25
5	12	19	26
6	13	20	27
7	14	21	28

Babylonian Lunar Month with sabbaths (shaded boxes) falling on the seventh day of the week.

It is from this religious system and calendar arrangement that the post-exilic Jews or Judahites based their "seventh day of the week" Sabbath. On the Babylonian calendar the Sabbath was always on the last day or seventh day of the seven-day period. So just as the Jews adopted the Babylonian names for their calendar months, they also adopted the seventh day of the week as their Sabbath. This was in principle a definite change from the Hebrew Sabbath occurring on the first day of the week.

THE SABBATH & THE ROMAN CALENDAR

Around 90-80 B.C., both the Babylonians and Romans, perhaps independently of each other, started to employ a "planetary" naming system for the days of the week. The days were named in order of importance of the planetary bodies, namely: *Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus* and *Saturn.* The Jews at this time had assimilated their Babylonian Sabbath to the planetary week, placing their Sabbath on the day of *Saturn* or Saturday, which was the seventh day of the planetary week.

> The clearest early evidence on the planetary week, according to Colson (1926), is to be found in Roman writers in the first century B.C., identifying the Jewish *Shabbat* with Saturn's

14 Webster, *Rest Days,* p. 237.

15 F.H. Colson, *The Week,* Cambridge University Press, 1926, pp. 12, 13.

day together with more than a hint that they thought the Jews to be Saturn-worshipers.[16]

The keeping of Saturday as the Sabbath was equivalent to keeping the seventh day of the Babylonian lunar week.

> The association of the Sabbath Day with Saturday was probably one reason why Saturn, a planet in Babylonian astrological schemes . . . should have come to assume in late classical times the role of an unlucky star. The oldest reference to Saturday is found in a verse by the poet Tibullus (d. 19 B.C.), who apparently identifies Saturn's Day with the supposed inauspicious Jewish Sabbath, when he gives as one of his excuses for not quitting Rome the bad omens which detained him "on the sacred day of Saturn."[17]

Formation of the Names of the Days of the Week			
PLANET	**ROMAN**	**SAXON**	**ENGLISH**
Sun	Dies Solis	Sun's Day	Sunday
Moon	Dies Lunae	Moon's Day	Monday
Mars	Dies Martis	Tiw's Day	Tuesday
Mercury	Dies Mercurii	Woden's Day	Wednesday
Jupiter	Dies Jovis	Thor's Day	Thursday
Venus	Dies Veneris	Friga's Day	Friday
Saturn	Dies Saturni	Seterne's Day	Saturday

The concept of Saturn as an "unlucky planet" was not derived from the Roman planetary week, but was adopted from the religion of Babylon where the *seventh day* was "reckoned as unfavorable to enterprise."[18] So Saturn or Saturday also carried the connotation of an unlucky or evil day, just as the Babylonian *Shabattu* or Sabbath day was regarded as an "evil day." The concept carried over to the Jewish Sabbath on the Roman calendar just as the seventh day concept had been.

The Roman historian Dio Cassius (c. 155-238 A.D.) wrote a history of Rome in the Greek, in which he refers to the worship

16 William M. O'Neil, *Time and the Calendars,* 1975, p. 36.

17 Hutton Webster, *Rest Days,* New York: MacMillan Co., 1916 pp. 244-45.

18 Colson, *The Week,* p. 35.

the Jews rendered to their God in the 1st century B.C., and states: "They. . . dedicated to him the day called the day of Saturn, on which, among many other most peculiar observances, they undertake no serious occupation."[19] The Roman statesmen Tacitus (55-117 A.D.) revealed the association of the Jews' Sabbath day with the planet Saturn, stating that: "They were pleased to have a rest on the seventh day. . . Some [Jews] hold it to be an honor to Saturn . . . because the star [Saturn] moves in the highest sphere, and of the seven planets exerts the principal part of that energy whereby mankind are governed."[20]

Many of the Babylonianized Judahites had, after the dispersion in 70 A.D., mixed with other races and formed the "Jews" we know today. They retained the Babylonian ways, such as the Babylonian Talmud, lunar calendar, the seventh day of the week sabbath, etc., while still claiming some aspects of the original Hebrew culture. So they followed not the Hebrew sabbath, but the Babylonian sabbath. The traditions surrounding the sabbath of Babylon are so similar to those of Judaism that they have to be of the same origin. Judaism is not the religion of the Old Testament but rather is mostly Babylonian, with only some forms and words of Hebrew.

When we thus read in the New Testament that the day started at sunset, or that the Sabbath was on the last day of the week, most erroneously think this was a carry over of an Israelite practice or something established by God. But these aspects of the calendar and the Sabbath at that time in Judea were truly Babylonian in origin, just like the names of the months were.

Before the captivity of Judah by the Babylonians the calendar was Hebrew. After the Exile it was Babylonian as was the Sabbath, and its principles were adapted to the Roman calendar. Thus we find evidence that the Exiles from Babylon had observed the day of Saturn as a sacred day of rest and religious celebration. The people of Judea at the time of Christ had a sabbath that their ancestors got from Babylon. If it is a product

19 Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana* (Roman History), book 37, chap. 17.

20 Tacitus, *The Histories,* book 5, chap. 2.

of Babylon then it is not a product of the Bible, and if it is not the product of the Bible then it cannot be the same Sabbath.

This Babylonianized Sabbath was in effect "the law of the land" at that time, but that does not make it the law of God, or the law of the land in America or anywhere else. True Israelites have no obligation to follow such practices.

We thus see that the law, customs and Sabbath of Judea at the time of Christ were more Babylonian than they were Hebrew. But the Sabbath was as sacredly held as though directly given by God. This is a key which many have missed.

THE SABBATH AND THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus was only the final link is a long series of conquests and invasions which weakened the strongholds of the city and brought it under foreign dominion. When these stages of conquest and captivity are examined, we find it very significant that each step which brought about the demise of Jerusalem was due to the Sabbath issue. It was the Judaic-Babylonian belief and adherence to the Sabbath which had caused the fall and destruction of Jerusalem.

After the city was established under Ezra and Nehemiah, it was at peace for about 150 years. When attacked by the Greek general Ptolemy, the people believed the Sabbath was too sacred of a day to fight upon. This allowed the city to be conquered:

> After the death of Alexander (324 B.C.), Ptolemy surprised Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, when the Jews would not fight, plundered the city, and carried away a great number of the inhabitants to Egypt.[21]

During the Maccabean war against the Syrian army in 167 B.C., some of the Judahites would not follow their king to fight on the Sabbath, to avoid "profaning the Sabbath." So when the Syrians attacked they would not even "cast a stone at them,"

21 *The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia,* Rev. Samuel Fallows, ed., Chicago: Howard-Severance Co., 1908, vol. 2, p. 931.

but said, "Let us die in our innocence," believing it was right and godly not to fight on the Sabbath. Due to this, the Syrians were able to "rise up against them in battle on the Sabbath, and they slew them with their wives and children, and their cattle, to a number of a thousand people" (I Maccabees 2:34-38).[22]

In 63 B.C., the Roman General Pompey attacked Jerusalem, and after three months of battle conquered the city. It was only by taking advantage of the religious scruples of the Jews and attacking them on the Sabbath day when they would not strike a blow in their defense, that Pompey was able to make a breach in the walls and capture the stronghold.[23]

The Roman historian Dio Cassius, in speaking of Pompey's attack of Jerusalem, say that if the Jews "had continued

Pompey and his army slaughtering the Jews on their Sabbath

22 Also see Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews,* XII, 4, 2.

23 Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews,* XIV, 4, 2. and 3.

defending it on all days alike, he could not have gotten possession of it." But they had "made an exception of what are called the days of Saturn," which allowed the Romans on those days "to batter down the wall."[24] Thus the final assault was also made on Saturn's day and met no resistance. Cassius also narrates the story of the capture of Jerusalem by Herod the Great in 37 B.C., who had an army borrowed from Rome led by Gaius Sosius. Of their victory over the Jews he said:

> The first of them to be captured were those who were fighting for the precinct of their god, and then the rest on the day even then called the day of Saturn. And so excessive were they in their devotion to religion that the first set of prisoners, those who had been captured along with the temple, obtained leave from Sosius, when the day of Saturn came round again, and went up into the temple and there performed all the customary rites, together with the rest of the people.[25]

Thus the defenders of the city were captured on "the day of Saturn," or their Sabbath day, as they would not make any defense. Cassius also notes that this capture, like the earlier one by Pompey, was effected on "what was even then called Saturn's day." As a result all their wealth was plundered, thousands killed, and their city ruled by their arch enemy—the Edomite Herod— all due to their position on the Sabbath.

The final fall of Jerusalem in 67-70 A.D., was also, and most fittingly, associated with the Jewish Sabbath, the keeping of Saturday or the "sacred day of Saturn." Frontinus, a Roman military officer and tactician (d. about 103 A.D.), says that Vespasian defeated the Jews by attacking them on Saturn's Day, when it was unlawful for them to do anything.[26] Tacitus in relating the story of the capture of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by the armies of Vespasian and Titus, indicates that the during this time the Jews were honoring the day of Saturn, allowing their stronghold to be weakened.[27]

24 Dio Cassius, *Roman History,* book 37, chap. 16.

25 Dio Cassius, *Roman History,* book 49, chap. 22.

26 Frontinus, *Strategematica,* ii, I, 17; Hutton Webster, *Rest Days,* 1916, p. 245.

The people of Judea at the time of Christ were not practicing the Hebrew Sabbath, but a Babylonian version of the Sabbath. These "Jews" continue to adhere to this Saturn day (Saturday) Sabbath to this day, and while they claim Hebrew heritage, they follow Babylonian customs and traditions. There is a Talmudic story which tells how Moses, having arranged with Pharaoh for a day of rest to be observed by the Israelites in Egypt, was asked what day he thought most suitable for the purpose. Moses answered, "The seventh day, sacred to Saturn; work done upon this day never prospers."[28] The Jews like to claim the heritage of Israel but as mongrels they cannot lawfully do so. Nor do they truly and accurately follow the true Israelite laws and customs. As their Talmud shows they always have some distortion or deviation of the true Hebrew law. Their claim of Saturday (the last day of the week) as the Sabbath at the time of Moses is an example of this, for the Hebrew Sabbath was on the first day of the week. Jewish law (Talmud) is a strange mixture of Hebrew and Babylonian law, and is proof of their own genetic hybridization. This hybrid mixture of law and race has deceived millions regarding what is the true law and who are the true Israelites, and with this study, what is the true Sabbath.

The failure of most to distinguish between the laws, customs and institutions of the pre-exilic period (1500-600 B.C.) and the post-exilic period (500 B.C - 70 A.D.) in Biblical history, has been the source of a great deal of misunderstanding.

The Pharisaical and superstitious notion that fighting was unlawful on the Sabbath does not appear until the post-exilic period. No such belief or concept existed in the Israelite period. This notion was derived in part from Babylon, but it was used by Judahites who believed this was always the way of their ancestors. It was this super religious attachment to the Sabbath and the observance of a strict and rigorous rest on that day which brought about the eventual destruction of Jerusalem.

27 Tacitus, *The Histories,* book 5, chap. 2-4.

28 Jeremias, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East,* vol. I, p. 202; Webster, *Rest Days,* p. 244.

5

THE TIME OF THE SABBATH

THE START OF THE DAY

There are several positions or arguments as to the time of day which the Sabbath is to start and end. It is generally regarded that the Sabbath begins when the day begins. In American law and Anglo-Saxon common law the calendar day is clearly reckoned from midnight to midnight, but in some cases the "day" refers to sunrise to sunset:

> Lord Coke says, that at common law the day is divided into the *natural* and the *artificial* day; the natural, consisting of twenty-four hours, and the artificial (or solar) of the space intervening between the rising and setting of the sun. . . . At common law the natural day extends from midnight to midnight, yet it was decided by the court, that the statute prohibiting the service of process on the Lord's day had reference only to the solar day.[1]

Thus the civil or calendar day under our law is from midnight to midnight, yet at common law the term "day" may in some instances mean the *solar* day—from sunrise to sunset. The question is what was the time of day the *original* Sabbath in the Bible was kept and was it the same as the calendar day?

With orthodox Judaism the Sabbath commences with the sunset of Friday, and ends with the sunset of Saturday. This is also the time used by the Babylonians.

> The Babylonians, at an early stage, used twelve equal fractions of the day measured from sunset to sunset. [2]

1 Supreme Court of New York: *Pulling v. The People,* 8 Barbour's Rep. 384, 385, 287 (1850). See also *Shaw v. Dodge,* 5 N.H. 462 (1831).

2 William M. O'Neil, *Time and the Calendars,* Sydney University Press, 1975, p. 4.

> The Babylonians, Jews, and Greeks counted a day from sunset to sunset.[3]

It is traditionally believed that the original Hebrew Sabbath and calendar day were also reckoned from sunset to sunset. The notion that the day began at sunset is derived from several verses which deal with festivals and feast days. The main verse quoted in support of this is as follows:

> It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and you shall afflict souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall you celebrate your sabbath (**Leviticus 23:32**).

This verse is always quoted to support the position that the Sabbath, and thus the day begins at sunset or evening. But this verse is not talking about weekly sabbaths. The sabbath here is a specific day, the *Day of Atonement,* which occurs only once a year. Many have subconsciously made the word "sabbath" plural and applied it to all weekly sabbaths, and then have gone another step further and applied it to all days of the year. This all inclusive interpretation and application of this verse is unwarranted. We need to look at some other verses on the matter.

> In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even (**Exodus 12:18**).

The event being described here is Passover which is celebrated "at evening" (Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:3), or "at even, at the going down of the sun" (Deut. 16:6). The feast was to be celebrated by the eating of the Passover meal at evening on the 14th, and at evening each day until the 21st day. The feast was celebrated at evening because that was supper time, and thus it has no bearing as to when the calendar day begins.

When we look at the verses used to support the position that the day begins at evening or sunset, we find that the few that are mentioned all deal with some sort of festival or religious event or practice. Evening was the time when certain sacrifices were made,[4] when religious meals were eaten,[5] when certain

3 *The New Encyclopedia Britannica,* 15th Ed., vol. 15, "Calendar," p. 460.

4 1 Kings 18:29, 36; Psa. 141:2; Ezra 9:4, 5.

5 Exodus 12:6-8; 16:8, 12. The Passover was a sacrifice and a meal.

offerings were made,[6] and when oblations were made.[7] But this doesn't make evening the start of the day any more than the fact that some of these same things, as well as other events, were done at other times of the day. For instance, morning also was a common time to make offerings and sacrifices.[8]

Many authorities will attest that in the Old Testament times the Israelites employed several different time-keeping methods for dividing the day:

> The Hebrews are supposed to have adopted from an early period minute specifications of the parts of the natural day. Roughly, they were content to divided it into "morning, evening and noonday," (Psa. 55:17); but when they wished for greater accuracy they pointed to six unequal parts, each of which was again subdivided. These are held to have been — **1.** "The dawn." **2.** "Sunrise." **3.** "Heat of the day," or about 9 o'clock. **4.** "The two noons," Gen. 43:16; Deut. 28:29. **5.** "The cool of the day," before sunset, Gen. 3:8, **6.** "Evening." Before the captivity the Israelites divided the night into three watches, Psa. 63:6; 9:4, viz. the first watch, lasting till midnight, Lam. 2:19; the "middle watch," lasting till cockcrow, Judges 7:19; and the "morning watch," lasting till sunrise. Exod. 14:24.[9]

There thus are other time divisions to mark off the time of day that were used by the Israelites. "Evening" is but one of several methods used. Thus it becomes somewhat presumptuous to say that it is the division for the calendar day, or that God's day begins and ends at evening. This leads us to the exact meaning of the word "evening" (or even) as used in Scripture. It is derived from the Hebrew word '*ereb*' and means:

> 6153. ereb, *eh'-reb*; from 6150; *dusk*;— +day, even (ing, tide), night.[10]

6 2 Kings 16:15

7 Daniel 9:21

8 2 Kings 16:15; 1 Chron. 16:40; 2 Chron 2:4; 13:11; Ezra 3:3.

9 William Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary,* New York: Thomas Nelson Pub., 1986, p. 140.

10 *Strong's Dictionary of the Hebrew Bible.*

The word *ereb* is used along with day, which makes sense if this word always means evening as we know it, but it also is used along with evening and night, which would infer it does not always mean evening or sunset.[11] The word is derived from another word (#6148 & 6150) which means *to be darken*, or to *intermix* or intermingle as in the light with darkness. There are two times when this condition occurs—sunrise and sunset.

The Hebrew word *ereb* is not an exact equivalent to our word "evening" but is closer to our word "twilight" or "dusk." While twilight more commonly refers to "the subdued light just after sunset" it also means, "in less common usage, just before sunrise."[12] Thus the word could be used to indicate the dark or dusky time around sunrise or dawn. Thus the Fenton translation of Leviticus 23:32 reads:

> It (the day of Atonement) is a Rest of Rests for you, when you shall humble your souls, on the ninth of the month at daybreak, from dawn to evening;—you shall rest to refresh yourselves.

This translation is not applicable to the Passover event where the word "evening" appears to be an appropriate English rendering, being the time for eating supper. But at any rate, it is not warranted to apply this division of time to the weekly sabbaths and certainly not to the calendar day.

THE ISRAELITE CALENDAR DAY

There is evidence in the Bible that there was a difference between the religious or sacred time of day, in which certain festival events were marked off, and the civil or calendar day, which marked a beginning and end of the calendar day.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was "on the fifteenth day " of the month of Abib (Lev. 23:5). In Exodus 12, verse 17, it also says that "you shall observe the feast of unleavened bread,"

11 In the KJV this word is translated as "night" four times (Gen. 49:27; Lev. 6:20; Job 7:4; Psa. 30:5); and as "days" once (Dan. 8:14).

12 *Webster's New World Dictionary,* 2nd Ed., World Pub., 1976, p. 1536.

but verse 18 says the observance for this day is done, "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even." The Feast day cannot be both on the 14th and 15th of the day. Rather, what we see here is a distinction between the start of the religious practice (the 14th day at even), and the day of the calendar (the 15th day). The calendar day must have started on midnight for this feast to have been "on the fifteenth day."

Another example of this is with the Day of Atonement. Regarding this day the Bible says: "the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement" (Lev. 23:27). But in regards to the observance of this day verse 32 says "in the ninth day of the month at even, from even to even, shall you celebrate your sabbath." Here again we see that the religious celebration of this sabbath day, in which they were to "afflict your souls," was started in the ninth day at "evening" (*ereb*), But it was "on the tenth day" that the day officially existed — this was the calendar date ascribed to that day (Num. 29:7; Lev. 23:27-28; 16:30). Again, it is plausible that this division of the civil day was at midnight, but it obviously was not at evening or sunset.

Obvious confusion will exist with such verses if the distinction between the religious times of the day and the civil day is not understood. It is the same with the Hebrew calendar itself, where the religious or sacred year started on Abib 1st, and the civil year started on Ethanim 1st. We cannot substitute the one for the other or say they are the same for they clearly are not. But those who have the civil day at sunset are doing just that. We see that the verses which most quote in support of a day starting at sunset are specifically dealing with the religious day only, not the civil or calendar day. It was only after the Babylonian captivity that the start of the religious day or events (sunset) also became the start of the calendar day.

It is very likely that Israel followed the division of the day at midnight as that is what they used in Egypt. The day could also be recognized as "the interval between dawn and darkness (Gen 1:5; 8:22)" or as "an interval of time between two successive risings of the sun."[13] Some authorities assert that

13 John D. Davis, *A Dictionary of the Bible,* Westminster Press, 1934, p. 170.

"the biblical day was solar, and therefore commenced at sunrise." But "after the exiles returned from Babylonia (536 B.C), the lunar-solar calendar was introduced, and from then on the Sabbath (and civil day) was observed from sunset."[14]

There is other evidence that the evening or setting of the sun did not mark off the civil or calendar days, but that midnight or sunrise was at an early stage used to divide the calendar days. When Israel left Egypt, God had assigned the day of the Exodus as a special day on the calendar (Exod. 13:3-4). Just before this event was the Passover. Regarding the Passover Moses stated:

> 4 And Moses said, Thus says the LORD, About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt:
>
> 5 And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die (**Exodus 11:4, 5**).

The Passover was when God passed through the land, and when he saw "the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts," He then would "passover the door" and not destroy the firstborn (Exodus 12:23). This was the "Passover," and occurred "about midnight" After this happened "Pharaoh rose up in the night," and seeing what happened "he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get out from among my people" (Exodus 12:30, 31). Thus the Exodus of the Israel people was at night:

> It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt (**Exodus 12:42**).
>
> For in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night (**Deuteronomy 16:1**).

The actual passover occurred around midnight and the actual exodus from Egypt occurred immediately thereafter, perhaps about 1:00 A.M.[15] The two were practically back to back events. But God said the Passover was to be celebrated on the 14th of the month (Lev. 23:5), and the Exodus on the 15th with

14 Nathan A. Barack, *A History of the Sabbath,* New York: Jonathan David Pub., 1965, p. 24.

15 The Exodus occurred at the time of the full moon that came just after the spring equinox.

the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exod. 12:17; Lev. 23:6). The only way these two events can be regarded as being on two different days is if "midnight" was a dividing time for the calendar days. If the start of the "day" was at sunset, which would have been only four hours before God slew the first born in Egypt, then the Passover and the Exodus occurred on the same day. Even the Passover meal was clearly after the sunset — "they shall eat the flesh in that night" (Exod. 12:8).

Although the Passover and the Exodus occurred during the same "night," God regarded them as occurring on two different days. Note the wording used in the account given by Moses about these events:

> And they [Israel] departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with a high hand in the sight of the Egyptians (**Numbers 33:3**).

The word "morrow" here means "the tomorrow, or next day."[16] Thus here we clearly have the Exodus being classified as occurring on the "next day" or day after the Passover day. The only way this can be so is by using the then familiar method of dividing the day at midnight. The two events occurred on the same night but the Passover was in the P.M. night of the 14th and the Exodus was in the A.M. night of the 15th day.

Since God had clearly categorized the Passover and the Exodus as occurring on two different calendar days, and were to be recognized as such, the time division involved in this reckoning could not have been from sunset to sunset. The sunset time marking was used only for certain religious or festival events, not the marking of the calendar days.

The reckoning of the civil day from "evening to evening" is clearly connected with "the use of the lunar calendar."[17] The division of the calendar day at sunset is of Babylonian origin. The days of the Hebrew calendar started at sunrise or midnight, which is to be gathered from the context or parallel passages.

16 *Strong's Hebrew Dictionary,* # 4283.

17 *The Popular & Critical Bible Encyclopedia,* vol. 3, (1908) p. 1661.

6

THE SABBATH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

JESUS AND THE SABBATH

The Jews, Pharisees and scribes at the time of Christ had primarily been following a Babylonian religion, which included a seventh day of the week sabbath that started at sunset. It was not the Sabbath and calendar preserved from Moses' time The calendar at the time of Jesus was basically the Roman calendar. The Sabbath and many laws and customs in the land were in outward form Hebrew, but in substance were Babylonian.

Saturday Sabbath keepers will try to get around this by saying that Jesus kept a Saturday Sabbath, so it does not matter what was the history of the calendar or the sabbath. So in one hand they claim the original Sabbath is important, and in the other say it does not matter. Their inconsistency and hypocrisy is again made manifest.

Nowhere is it recorded that Jesus worshiped or rested on the day called the Sabbath in Judea. We have to understand that the observance of the Jewish Sabbath on the last day of the week had been practiced in that land for the past 500 years. It was then "the law of the land," at least in an ecclesiastical sense, but that did not make it the law of God. As such it was a customary time when all the people went into the synagogues to worship. Jesus had on several occasions taken this opportunity the teach to the people who assembled in these buildings (Mark 1:21). He simply went to where the people were all gathered together, He did not honor their Sabbath — the sacred day of Saturn — which was then observed in the land.

On every occasion preaching was the purpose of Jesus' visit to the synagogue. The fact that Jesus taught in the synagogue no more honors that day than the days he went to the temple to teach or preach. Similarly, we may not deduce that Paul kept the sabbath from the fact that he employed the obvious evangelistic method of preaching to the people who gathered together on the last day of the week for the sabbath.[1]

Jesus showed no respect for the Sabbath that prevail in the land at that time because He knew what it was. He knew of its Babylonian nature, and that its practice, day and time of observance, and associated rituals were just another perversion of the true law of God. Jesus on many occasions seem to have intentionally done things on the Jews' Sabbath day which would enrage them, just so He could point out and expose the incorrect ideas and hypocrisy they had regarding the Sabbath.

We have in the four Gospels many accounts of sabbath conflicts between Jesus and the Jews or Pharisees. In the account of Jesus and His disciples plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath day, the Pharisees confront Jesus saying, *"thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day"*[2] In response Jesus referred them to two instances in the Old Testament that were exceptions to the Sabbath law. These were: (1) How David and his aides entered into the house of God and ate the showbread, which was unlawful for them as only the priest could do so;[3] (2) How on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath by doing servile work and are blameless.[4]

It is interesting to note that neither of these sabbath exemptions actually covered what Jesus and His disciples were doing on that day. Jesus seems to present these only to remind

1 Acts 9:20; 13:5, 14, 42-44; 14:1; 17:1f; 18:4, 19; 19:8.

2 Matthew 12:2; Mark 2:24; Luke 6:2.

3 Referring to 1 Sam. 21:1-6.

4 The double offerings required on the sabbath (Num. 28:9) could not be presented, and the new-baked showbread (Lev. 24:5; 1 Chron. 9:32) could not be prepared and presented every sabbath morning, without a good deal of servile work on the part of the priests.

the Pharisees of their own exemptions to the Sabbath. Had the disciples been truly observing the Sabbath, they would have prepared their meals on the previous day as the law required. And if they had not the time to do so, they could have fasted for that day. But Jesus does not imply that what He and the disciples did was wrong, as He did not recognize their Sabbath or sabbath laws. He instead uses the event to point out how the Pharisees had put ceremonial observances above moral duty and thereby "condemned the guiltless" (Matt. 12:7). Jesus also added a specific application of this principle to the law of the sabbath, by saying: *"The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath"* (Mark 2:27). This does not assert an excuse for the sabbath breaches but reminds the Pharisees of the original meaning of the Sabbath, which to them was a new thing. As one writer states regarding this saying:

> Thc saying does not seek in any way to justify the behavior of the disciples. Their plucking of the ears of corn was by no means to be excused. There was no obvious necessity which would justify this breach of the sabbath: the disciples were not in danger of their lives, nor were they bringing help to others in urgent need. . . According to Luke the breach of the sabbath was particularly serious; he tells us that the disciples plucked the ears of corn even before the first sheaf of the harvest had been offered to God. The sentence, 'The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath,' if it was spoken in this connection, is nothing less than the enunciation of a new principle. In uttering it Jesus was throwing overboard the entire sabbath theology established by post-exilic Judaism.[5]

Jesus did not intend to justify the breaches He and the disciples committed against the prevailing sabbath law, but rather to highlight certain principles regarding ethics and the theology of the sabbath. His statements were an attack not on the Fourth Commandment, but on the whole theology of the Jewish Sabbath. When the basic theology of a special feast or holy day is off track, so is the way and time in which it is kept.

5 Willy Rordorf, *Sunday: The History of the Day of Rest,* London: SCM Press Ltd., 1968 p. 61-62.

So when Jesus spoke against the theology of the Pharisees, He thus spoke against their sabbath. The Jews' theology prescribed that the sabbath be strictly kept without regard to human needs, which had the effect of placing the sabbath *above* man. The statement of Jesus shows that by instituting a day of rest, God wanted to give man a blessing, not a hardship. If the day of rest no longer produced a blessing but a hardship, it had failed in its divine purpose, and as a consequence, defying it or disregarding it was no sin according to the spirit of the law. In this sense Jesus had harked back to the original meaning of the Sabbath as a day of rest introduced on social and physical grounds for the sake of man's well being.

The negative attitude of Jesus towards the sabbath of His day is further illustrated in the numerous accounts of the healing stories. In every such account it can be noticed that the sabbath healings all have one common trait: Jesus' actions were never answers to dire pleas for help which would allow no delay. Help given to a sick person in a emergency would have given rise to no objection from the majority of the scribes and Pharisees. The evidence of the Gospels, however, describes Jesus healing people on the sabbath which suffered from prolonged ailments, and certainly not from acute or terminal illnesses or infirmities. The accounts are: the man with the withered hand (Matt. 12:10; Mark 3:1), the woman whose back had been bent for eighteen years (Luke 13:11), the man which had dropsy (Luke 14:2), the man who had been bedridden for thirty-eight years (John 5:5), the man who had been born blind (John 9:1-14). When Jesus healed the blind man He told him to "take up thy bed and walk." When the Jews saw him they said to him *"It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for you to carry your bed"* (John 5:8-10). Jesus knew the Jews would see this man doing this and thus He deliberately told him to do this "unlawful" act.

Since Jesus in accordance with the unanimous testimony of the Gospels purposely healed people on the sabbath who clearly were not in acute distress, his deeds of healing were an offense and a provocation. It is easy to understand the indignant statement made by the ruler of the synagogue to the people:

"There six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day" (Luke 13:14). All these people who were healed by Jesus could certainly have waited for their cure until the next day.[6]

When Jesus was confronted on the issue of healing on the sabbath, He often gave the explanation of some animal which had fallen into a pit on the sabbath day and thus is in urgent need to be helped out (Matt. 12:11; Luke 14:5). Yet this is obviously not a direct legitimate analogy to a sick human who does not absolutely need immediate assistance. Here again His reply was only to point out their error and hypocrisy in their creating rules and exemptions for the Sabbath, not to justify His acts of nonemergency healing on the sabbath.[7] He deliberately defied their sabbath and used their own hypocrisy as a defense.

While Jesus could have just as well healed people on any day, He took the opportunity to do so on the Jewish Sabbath to expose their hypocrisy and the errors of their sabbath. When the ancestors of these Judahites were in the Babylonian Exile they adopted new concepts of law and culture. The Babylonian ways, which later became Phariseeism, were not based on the laws and ethics God gave to Israel. Likewise the Sabbath observed by the Pharisees was based upon Babylonian practices and principles, not on the Sabbath of God.

> Certainly the late Pharisaic adherence to the law which forbade healing or even an act of mercy on the Sabbath is due largely to the Babylonian and Assyrian Church Calendar. This Pharisaic attitude is traceable to the Exilic period in Hebrew [history].[8]
>
> From Babylonian sources it is known that certain days of the month, the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th, were days in which the king might not perform certain acts, . . .neither might the *magus* prophesy, nor the physician minister to the sick.[9]

6 Rordorf, op. cit., p. 66.

7 Such exemptions are found in the Talmudic books *Yadayim* and *Shabbat.*

8 Langdon, *Babylonian Menologies and the Semitic Calendars,* p. 89.

9 *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* (1971 edition), vol. 19, p. 851.

Thus the "law" that no one could heal on the Sabbath day was derived from Babylonian sources, and Jesus no doubt knew the true nature and origin of this law, and He had no qualms about breaking it. Before He did so on one occasion, He asked the Pharisees, *"Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil?"* (Mark 3:4). This was a trick question which the Pharisees dare not answer either way. Jesus presents a principle for violating their law which they themselves used in making up exemptions that allowed them to do good things on the Sabbath.

All of this proves how wrong and off point the Jews and Pharisees were regarding the Sabbath they kept and the reason why. Most of them may have been the actual descendants of Abraham, but their minds were the product of Babylonian doctrine. The sabbath they followed was not the true Sabbath God had ordained, so while Jesus in His healing activity *"had broken the sabbath"* (John 5:18), He didn't break God's law.

It has been claimed that Jesus supported the sabbath that prevailed at that time with the following verse.

> But pray you that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath (**Matthew 24:20**).

Some quote this verse and say that Jesus meant you should not want to travel and work on the Sabbath, and therefore He supported the seventh day of the week Sabbath. The context of this verse and accompanying verses is that of a warning of perilous times, and of the dangerous or harmful acts that they might encounter and should avoid. The danger associated with a sudden flight in winter is obvious, as it would be much more difficult to survive. But what is the danger associated with such a flight on the Sabbath? Adam Clarke in his *Commentaries* remarks that, "On the sabbath the gates of all the cities and towns were kept shut and barred; so that if their flight should be on the sabbath, they could not expect admission into any place of security in the land." The *Wycliff Bible Commentary* says:

> Neither on the Sabbath. A reference to the difficulty of travel (securing lodges, meals, services) on the Sabbath in an area where Jews will be observing such restrictions.[10]

10 *Wycliff Bible Commentary*, Ed. by Everett Harrison (1962), p. 972.

We should also recall that on the Sabbath the Jews did not fight in their defense. So when the armies attacked Jerusalem on that day, it would be an easy slaughter for those outside the walls. Anyway, those who claim this verse as one where Jesus was honoring the Jewish Sabbath fail to understand the context of what is being said. The chapter deals with the coming destruction of Jerusalem, a very perilous time. Thus traveling in winter or on the sabbath which was commonly kept at that time would compound the danger.

Scripture makes it clear that *"(Jesus) kept not the sabbath day"* (John 9:16). Some might say that if Jesus did not recognize or observe the prevailing Sabbath in the land, then He violated the Fourth Commandment. The fact that this Sabbath was not the true Hebrew Sabbath negates such a proposition. Also, while Jesus did not keep the Jewish Sabbath it does not mean He did not keep another day. There is no indication on the matter either way so the presumption is unwarranted.

There is one fact that must also be considered here, and that is that Jesus at no time ever *commanded* that the Sabbath should be kept or observed. He commanded every one of the Ten Commandments except the Fourth Commandment. There is no, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," or "Six days you shall work, but the seventh day you shall rest." Such directives are completely absent from the words of Jesus and His apostles. This cannot be regarded as an accident, but was an intentional omission. But why was this? Jesus knew that their sabbath was not the true *Hebrew Sabbath* of Moses' time, and that it did not even in principle represent the purpose and ethics behind the God-ordained Sabbath. He did not intend to endorse that sabbath by commanding the law on the sabbath, least any could claim His support of it, for Jesus clearly did not support it.

> *Christ and the apostles nowhere enjoin the observance of the sabbath but take it for granted.*[11]

The Sabbath that prevailed in Judea at the time of Christ, the Saturday Sabbath, was naturally a very significant day as it had been practiced in the land for the past 500 years. It was a

11 *Chamber's Encyclopedia*, Pergamon Press, 1967, vol. 12 "Sabbath" p. 123.

very prominent part of the established culture, and the knowledge of the Sabbath in the Scriptures was also known. But what was not known was the Babylonian nature of the Sabbath that then existed. Christ obviously knew of this and thus never

Only Nine of the Ten Commandments Were Given in the New Testament:

[1] *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."* Matt. 22:39; Luke 10:27; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 5:10-11; 6:9; 10:7.

[2] *"Thou shalt have no idols or serve other gods. . ."* Matt. 6:24; Acts 15:20; 1 Cor. 10:14; 1 John 5:21.

[3] *"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain."* Matt. 5:33-34; 15:9; Mark 7:7; James 5:12; 1:26.

[4] Jesus commanded all of the other nine commandments of the Decalogue except this one. None of the Apostles directed that the Sabbath should be kept.

[5] *"Honor thy father and thy mother."* Matt. 15:4-6; 19:18-19; Mark 7:10; Eph. 6:2.

[6] *"Thou shalt not kill."* Matt. 5:21-22; 23:31; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Romans 13:9; James 2:11.

[7] *"Thou shalt not commit adultery."* Matt. 5:27-32; Mark 10:11-19; Luke 16:18-20; John 8:4; Rom. 2:22; 13:9; James 2:11.

[8] *"Thou shalt not steal."* Matt. 19:18; Rom. 2:21; 13:9; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Eph. 4:28.

[9] *"Thou shalt not bear false witness."* Matt. 19:18; 1 Tim. 4:2; Eph. 4:14; 5:5; James 1:22, 26.

[10] *"Thou shalt not covet."* Mark 7:22; Luke 12:15; Rom. 7:7; 13:9; 1 Cor. 5:10-11; 6:10; Eph. 5:3-5; Col. 3:5; 2 Tim. 3:2.

commanded that it be kept, nor did He keep it Himself, as either would set a precedent endorsing that Sabbath. Since the people did not really know of the change which the Sabbath had undergone, they religiously followed the corrupted Sabbath, as indicated by the scene where Jesus is buried in the sepulcher:

> And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment (**Luke 23:56**).

The people then followed the seventh day of the week sabbath and in doing so believed it was the commandment of God. But there were many cases where the people were doing things they thought was pursuant to scripture, just as with many Christians today, but which in fact were not scriptural. This passage is stating what was the current custom upon the subject, not what was the original and true law on the subject. Most will acknowledge that the Pharisees were off point or incorrect to some degree on every issue of law, but want to believe that for some reason they got the observance of the sabbath day right.

JESUS CONDEMNED FOR BREAKING THE SABBATH

It is only logical that after the sabbath conflicts the opponents of Jesus should have decided to kill him for His words and acts against the Sabbath. This is what we read of just after Jesus healed the man with a withered hand on their Sabbath:

> And the Pharisees went forth, and immediately took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him (**Mark 3:6**).[12]

When Jesus healed the lame man on the sabbath and also told the man to take up his bed on the sabbath, it is stated that:

> And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day (**John 5:16**; also verse 18).

In John 7:23-25, after Jesus made a man "whole on the sabbath day," He was recognized as the one "they seek to kill."

12 And Matthew 12:14.

When the Pharisees encountered the blind man Jesus restored sight to they said of Jesus: "This man is not of God, because he keeps not the sabbath day" (John 9:16).

When the Jews had Christ arrested to be tried before Pilate, it does not appear they raised the accusations of the sabbath breaches. They perhaps knew Pilate would not at all care about that charge by itself. They thus raised the charges of sedition, subversion, claiming to be a king, and inciting tax evasion, but could not prove any of it (Luke 23:1-4, 14-15).

There is indication in the apocryphal book *The Acts of Pilate* (a.k.a. the *Gospel of Nicodemus*), that Jesus was charged with breaking the Sabbath. In testifying before Pilate the Jews said:

> We know this man, that he is the son of Joseph the carpenter, begotten of Mary, and he says that he is the Son of God and a king; moreover he does *pollute the sabbaths and he would destroy the law of our fathers.*
>
> Pilate said: And what things are they that he does, and would destroy the law?
>
> The Jews say: *We have a law that we should not heal any man on the sabbath: but this man of his evil deeds has healed the lame and the bent, the withered and the blind and the paralytic, the dumb and them that were possessed, on the sabbath day!* [13]

Pilate apparently saw no evil in what Jesus had done, but the Jews said Jesus was a "sorcerer, and did His deeds by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." According to Tertullian, *Spect.* 30, Jesus was held by the Jews to be *'sabbati destructor'* (a destroyer of the sabbath). The Roman government found nothing done by Jesus worthy of death. But from the perspective of the Jews and Pharisees Jesus was a criminal or an outlaw. Jesus truly did violate the current sabbath, but He did not violate the law of God on the matter. Yet the sabbath violations were one of the main reasons that brought about the crucifixion of Jesus; and it was the seventh day of the week sabbath which Jesus violated and was condemned by, not the first day of the

13 The Acts of Pilate 1:1, from: *The Apocryphal New Testament,* by Montague R. James, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945, p. 96.

week sabbath. This serves as a strong sign that this sabbath was not, either in its time, day, purpose, or application, the Sabbath ordained by God.

While the sabbath that prevail in Judea at the time of Christ was claimed or believed to be based upon the original Mosaic Commandment (or Fourth Commandment), it was actually just a Babylonianized version of it.

The Saturday Sabbath was formed by a cursed people. Like the fig tree Jesus cursed, God had rejected and cursed the people of Judea who did not listen to His word. They were never to be accepted by God as His people. The economic system of these people was Babylonian and was rejected by God. God had rejected and destroyed the Temple and slated the city of Jerusalem for destruction. God had abandoned and cursed the land of Palestine, and even brought an end to His Old Covenant with Israel here. The seventh day of the week sabbath was also rejected, but it stayed with the cursed and rejected people known as "Jews." It would truly be a very strange and inconsistent thing if the sabbath of these people and that land was to be preserved and consecrated as something holy. It was, after all, a main cause of the death of Jesus Christ.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

It is clear from the forgoing that the seventh day of the week sabbath which prevailed in Judea was not to be the Sabbath God wanted for His people. God instead chose the first day of the week as the Sabbath day for His people. The Christian Sabbath which is on Sunday, the first day of the week, is historically based upon the New Testament accounts of the resurrection of Jesus Christ on that day:

> *Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene* (**Mark 16:9**).

It was apparently by Divine Providence that all four Gospels would clearly record the fact that the resurrection of Jesus was on the first day of the week. The event was to mark the first day of the week as a special day in Christendom and in God's

plan for His people. Aside from creation itself, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single most important and significant event in relation to man in all of Scripture or history.

Many issues are often raised to sidetrack attention from the fact that Jesus rose on Sunday, such as the length of time he was to be in the grave—"three days and three nights" (Matt. 12:40). It is said that this comes to 72 hours and thus Jesus could not have rose on Sunday if he was buried on Friday. What most don't understand is that the reckoning of time periods was inclusive, so that the day Jesus was buried and the day He rose are counted as two days. The Roman calendar also had an occasional eighth day known as "market day." But we need not belabor the issue more except to assert that all Bible authorities agree that the resurrection was on the first day of the week.

It was on the resurrection day that Jesus first appeared on five different occasions to His followers—to Mary Magdalene, to the other woman, to the two disciples on their road to Emmaus, to the Apostle Peter separately, to the Apostles collectively. It was during His visit with the Apostles collectively on Sunday that Jesus "breathed on them, and said to them, Receive you the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22).

The first day of the week was again consecrated one week later when Jesus appeared to the Eleven Apostles on that day.[14] The fact that Jesus made no appearance in the interval six days highlights the first day of the week as a special day. This double visit on the two Sundays was perhaps for the purpose of rendering that day especially noticeable by the Apostles.

The next Divine recognition of the first day of the week was when the Apostles had met together on that day and were "all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4). This occurred on the first Pentecost day after the Resurrection, "which in that year occurred on the first day of the week."[15] Thus, the day already

14 Jesus appeared to the Apostles "after eight days" (John 20:26) from His first appearance, which was the ordinary way of reckoning one week.

15 James A. Hessey, *Sunday: Its Origin, History, and Present Obligation,* New York: Pott, Young & Co., 1880, p. 30.

associated with the fulfillment of the great promise of Christ's resurrection, received a most marked signal by the fulfillment of another great promise, the descent of the Holy Spirit.

The apostolic generation at once grasped the importance of the first day of the week, linking it to the remembrance of the resurrection, and the appearances of the Lord in their presence on that day. The practice of meeting on the first day of the week had evidently become an established custom which was regarded as a special and even sacred time by the disciples and followers of Jesus. Thus twenty some years later we find them still meeting on the first day of the week:

> And upon the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow (**Acts 20:7**).

This account is when the Apostle Paul and his companions arrived at Troas, where they had "abode seven days," and it was "on the first day of the week" that they consecrated as a special time to assemble together in a celebrated feast. If the disciples and early Christians of this time had been in the habit of meeting on the seventh day of the week, the writer of Acts certainly would have so stated. It should also be remarked here that the phrase "breaking bread" is a technical term for observing the *Lord's Supper* and includes the *Holy Communion.*[16]

Another milestone in the recognition and consecration of the first day of the week in the New Testament is found in Paul's direction as to the collection for the needy "saints" or Christians in Judea:

> Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the Churches in Galatia, even so do you. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come (**I Corinthians 16:1-2**).

Paul here seems to allude to the first day of the week as one already known for the celebration of religious duties, and which he need not therefore recommend for the first time. This verse

16 Hessey, op. cit., p. 31; *Interpreter's Bible Dictionary,* vol. 3, p. 153.

First Day Of The Week Events In Scripture:

- Noah and his family and the animals leave the Ark and God makes the Noahic covenant (Gen. 8:13-22).
- The exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt (Exod. 13:3-4; 34:18; Num. 33:3; Deut. 16:1).
- The Israelite calendar begins on the first day of the week (Exod. 12:2).
- Israel begins its journey in the wilderness (Num. 10:11-12).
- The Tabernacle of God was first reared up and anointed, and the Ark of God placed inside of it (Exod. 40:2, 17-21).
- Feast of Unleavened Bread, a holy convocation (Lev. 23:7).
- The seven sabbaths and Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) on the first day of the week (Lev. 23:15-16; Deut. 16:9-10).
- Feast of Trumpets, a holy convocation (Num. 29:1).
- Special offerings & sacrifices (Ezek. 45:18, 25; Ezra 3:6).
- Feast of Tabernacles, a holy convocation (Lev. 23:34-35).
- Soloman's Temple and the alter dedicated (2 Chron. 7:1-11).
- The house of God sanctified (2 Chron. 29:17).
- God's people leave the Babylonian captivity (Ezra 7:9).
- Ezra brings the law to the people (Neh. 8:2).
- The Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1-9; Luke 24:1-6; John 20:1).
- The Holy Spirit comes upon the Apostles on the first day of the week (John 20:22; Acts 2:1-4).

then, along with Acts 20:7 and other similar allusions, plainly indicates that the Christian observance of this day, which later is distinctly called "the Lord's Day," was already a fixed practice of the churches.

By the end of the Apostolic period the first day of the week was kept sacred by Christians as the day of the Lord's resurrection, the beginning day of both the physical and of the

spiritual creations. Jesus, through His resurrection, is typified as the first fruits which were given up to God at the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost on the first of the week. As Paul states:

> But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept (**1 Corinthians 15:20**).

Even before these events in the New Testament we find that the first day of the week had been established as a special day in Israel. Not only were all of Israel's weekly Sabbath days on the first day of the week, but there are many other instances in the Old Testament in which some significant or Godly event occurred on the first of the week (see chart on opposing page).

The resurrection, the specific appearances of Christ, the giving of the Holy Spirit, and the meetings of the Apostles on the first day of the week, all influenced the early Christians to consecrate that day of the week. These events are of a definite weight, and unless greater or at least equal evidences exist in regard to some other day, this first day of the week is entitled to precedence as a matter of fitness to be the day selected by Divine Providence as the Christian Sabbath.

The first day of the week is the sign for life, of a new beginning, and of Divine hope; while the last day of the week is a sign of despair, destruction and an end of things. It was on the last or seventh day of the week that the Babylonians broke down the walls of Jerusalem, which marked the end of the city (**Jeremiah 39:2; 52:6-7**). It was the end of the kingly rule from the line of David, and it was the final end of the great nation of Israel. It was a day that brought about the destruction of the Temple of God. Whereas on the first day of the week the Temple was dedicated to God and later sanctified on that day.

Why would God assign the Sabbath to the first day of the week? The first of anything is traditionally regarded as the best or most important. *First* place or *first* class is better than second place or third class. God wanted Israel to offer up the *first* fruits of the harvest, not the second or last of the fruits. God wanted the *first* born consecrated to Him, not the second or last born. Likewise God chose the *first* of the week to be a special and holy day, not the seventh or last as was used in Babylon.

The end of the Old Covenant and the new dispensation of grace did not abrogate the law as so many have erroneously thought. The Fourth Commandment still is the foundation of our moral and legal duty to rest one day out of seven. The resurrection and subsequent events helped to serve as a signal or guide to Christians as to what day to hold as holy. It was not a "change" in the law, but more of a restoration of the law on the sabbath. The idea that God's Sabbath was changed or transferred from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week is completely erroneous.

THE LORD'S DAY

While on the isle of Patmos, John received the vision of the "Revelation of Jesus Christ," in which the Apostle John speaks of himself as being in the Spirit on *"the Lord's day"* (Rev. 1:10). But what is meant by this term? If it referred to the Sabbath which had long prevailed in Judea, John would have called it by that familiar name. The theory that this term meant the day of the coming of Jesus for judgment is untenable. The phrase *"the day of the Lord"* is different in the *Greek* from the phrase "the Lord's (an adjective) day, as the latter phrase corresponds to "the Lord's supper" (1 Corin. 11:20). The word "Lord's" identifies something belonging to Him now, whereas 'the day of the Lord' implies an act He will do at some day or time in the future. The phrase 'Lord's day' also is not a reference to Passover (or Easter) day only, for the ancient Church and the oldest Greek and Latin Ecclesiastical writers universally apply it to our Sunday or the first day of the week.

John's use of the term "the Lord's day" was made in reference to the weekly commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ. It is a day especially assigned to Christ, and which later was related to the sabbath, for that day too was especially assigned to Him. As Jesus said: *"For the Son of man is Lord of the sabbath day"*[17] The fact that Christ is Lord of the

17 Matt. 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5.

Sabbath, and that He sanctified the first day with His resurrection, makes it "the Lord's Day." There is good evidence that John was referring to Sunday (the first day of the week) in Revelation, as Colson states:

> The writer of the *Apocalypse* sees his vision on 'the Lord's day,' . . . It does not seem to me reasonable to doubt that he means Sunday, in face of the fact that this name for Sunday is undoubtedly found some thirty years later and remained afterwards in universal use.[18]

Though the phrase "the Lord's day" does not specifically mean sabbath, the connection of it to the Sabbath was developed by later Christian practices. The phrase actually means the first day of the week. It has been discovered that in an ancient Syrian, an Ethiopic and an Arabic version of Rev. 1:10, the text had actually read, "on the first day of the week."[19] And in the *Gospel of Peter* (12:50) it speaks of "the Lord's day" as the day "Mary Magdalene and her women friends came to the tomb" of Jesus, and "found the sepulcher open."[20] That day was the resurrection day on the first day of the week.

There is a day then which is the Lord's, and that day John referred to as "the Lord's Day," and which Jesus said is the Sabbath—"Lord of the Sabbath day." But in what way is He Lord of this day? One Bible commentary states:

> In what sense is the Son of man Lord of the Sabbath? Surely not to destroy it, for that would be a strange lordship. But rather to own it, to interpret it, to preside over it, and to ennoble it, by merging it in the "Lord's Day" (Rev. 1:10), breathing into it an air of liberty and love necessarily unknown before.[21]

In the New Testament the Greek word *kurios* is translated "Lord" (Strong's #2962) but the word "Lord's" in Rev. 1:10 is the Greek word *kuriakos*, which means "belonging to the Lord

18 F.H. Colson, *The Week,* Cambridge Univ. Press., 1926, p. 87.

19 Rordorf, *Sunday - The History of the Day of Rest,* p. 207, note 3.

20 Montague James, *The Apocryphal New Testament,* (Oxford, 1924), p. 93.

21 Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, *A Commentary on the Whole Bible,* vol. II, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1928, p. 40.

(Jehovah or Jesus).[22] It makes a specific reference to God's own day that He selected, as He did with the Sabbath. The idea of a the sabbath day being God's day was frequently revealed in the Old Testament. It is called *"The Sabbath of the LORD"* (Deut. 5:14; Exod. 20:10; Lev. 23:3, 38). God calls it *"My Sabbath"* (Lev. 19:3, 30; Exod. 31:3; Lev. 26:2; Isa. 56:4; Ezek. 20:12-24; 22:8, 26; 23:38; 44:24), and He says it is *"My holy day"* (Isa. 58:13). The Sabbath day truly is God's day or "the Lord's Day" in many respects. Thus, while the actual phrase 'the Lord's day' has no equivalent in Hebrew or Aramaic, the use of the adjective "Lord's" is explained by the use of the title 'Lord' for Jesus, and this title has its roots deep in the Old Testament. The day of Yahovah God is the day of Yahshua the Christ.

The phrase 'the Lord's day' in another perspective is not a new invention or usage by John as the term "Lord's" is similar to "Imperial," by which the first day of the month in Egypt and Asia Minor was known to be in honor of the emperor. The Christian day is thus the day of the Christian Lord or Emperor, Jesus.[23] We also find the term "Lord's" used in official Roman documents, where it also means 'imperial'. Where the word occurs in Christian linguistic usage (1 Cor. 11:20 and Rev. 1:10 only), it naturally refers to the Lord Jesus. In Rev. 1:10 it is referring to the day belonging to the Lord Jesus, just as in 1 Cor. 11:20 it denotes the meal associated with the Lord Jesus—"the Lord's Supper."

Thus the only day that can be called "the Lord's day" is the Sabbath of God. And at the close of Bible history John expressly recognizes the existence of the Lord's Day, which all authorities, ancient and contemporary, ascribe to the first day of the week. The Lord's Day thus stands in marked contrast to the Jewish Sabbath day which was on the last day of the week and which was never God's day — i.e., *the Lord's Day*.

22 *Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament,* #2960.

23 *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,* Abingdon: Nashville, 1962, vol. 3, p. 152.

7

THE SABBATH IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN ERA

After the Apostles died or were no longer heard from, a new era in Christian history starts. Many Christians today have little understanding of this era which marks one of the beginning stages of their own religion and faith. It thus is not surprising why so many arguments on the Sabbath go off in all different directions. Without a knowledge of the history of a subject we cannot be properly guided to its meaning in the present.

The post Apostolic period started out with Christian leaders and spokesmen who had been taught or instructed by the Apostles themselves. These Christian Fathers, as they are called, became the torchbearers of true Christianity, receiving divine truths directly from the Apostles, and transmitting them to the next generation. Thus the Christian leaders of the first three centuries after the Apostles are in part founders of Christianity.

It has been made apparent that the setting aside of the first day of the week or the Lord's Day as a special day for meeting, worshiping, feasting and resting was an Apostolic tradition. The testimony of early Christian and secular writers verify this tradition and solidify it as a special day in honor of the Resurrection of Jesus. On that day they took time off to gather together, to meet and fellowship, to worship, and to praise God. Thus the Lord's Day in the first three centuries had many attributes of a Christian Sabbath we would recognize today.

The following is a chronological listing of the words and acts of the early Christian Fathers, which is a testimony to the truth regarding the Lord's Day and the Sabbath. Outside of the New Testament, this is the earliest foundations of Christianity.

The Didache – 85 A.D. The *Didache* is perhaps the oldest Christian document known to exist. It is also called the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.* As to sacred times and seasons, the *Didache* (14:1) bears witness to the celebration of the first day of the week, and gives it, like Revelation, the significant name of "the Lord's Day."[1] On that day the congregations are directed to assemble, to break bread, to confess sins, to give thanks, and to celebrate the sacrifice of the Eucharist.[2]

Ignatius of Antioch – 101 A.D. The activities of Ignatius are traced to the year 70 A.D. He is known as a disciple of the Apostle John. In his *Epistle to the Magnesians* (9:1), Ignatius makes a contrast between "Judaism" and Christianity, and exempts the Jewish "Sabbath" from Christian activities:

> *Be not deceived with heterodox opinions, nor old unprofitable fables. For if we still live according to Judaism, we confess that we have not received grace. For even the most holy prophets lived according to Jesus Christ. For this they were persecuted, being inspired by His grace, to assure the disobedient that there is one God, who manifested Himself by Jesus Christ, His Son, who is His Eternal Word . . . If then they who walked in ancient customs came to a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living according to the Lord's day, on which also our life sprang up through Him and His death—whom some deny.*[3]

Ignatius in this passage refers to those who walked in ancient customs having come to a new hope; and they would no longer keep the Sabbath but live for the "Lord's day."[4] The ancient customs are those that the Jews have kept since their release from the Babylonian captivity, one of which was the ritualistic

1 The phrase literally means, "the Lord's Day of the Lord."

2 Philip Schaff, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,* pp. 27-28, N.Y.-1890.

3 See *The Ante-Nicene Fathers,* Edited by Alexander Roberts, Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1973, vol. I, p. 62.

4 A Seventh Day Adventist writer claims that this passage should be translated, "according to the Lord's life," but the Latin text reads "Lord's day," and is to be preferred for several reasons. Willy Rordorf, *Sunday—The History of the Day of Rest,* (1968), p. 211, note 1.

seventh day of the week sabbath. Ignatius appends to "Lord" the qualifying clause: 'on which also our life sprang up through him and his death.' That clearly refers to the resurrection on the first day of the week.

Letter of Pliny – 110 A.D. From a secular source we have the famous letter written by 'Pliny the Younger', governor of Pontus and Bithynia, in Asia Minor, to the Emperor Trajan of Rome. In this letter Pliny wrote concerning the Christians of his jurisdiction:

> *The Christians affirm the whole of their guilt or error to be, that they were accustomed to assemble on a fixed [or selected] day, before daybreak, and to sing hymns to Christ as to a god, and binding themselves by a solemn oath, not for any wicked purpose, but never to commit fraud, theft, or adultery; never to break their word, or to refuse, when called upon, to deliver up any trust. After which it was their custom to separate, and to assemble again to take a meal, but a general one, and without guilty purpose.*[5]

These Christians of Bithynia evidently had but *one* "fixed day" (*stato dies*) of public worship each week. If that day had been the Jewish Sabbath it would have been so named, says Professor H. Scott, for Pliny, like Horace, knew it well, and would not have called it a *stato dies.*[6] No one seriously argues that the designation 'on a fixed day' (*stato dies*) does not refer to the weekly Sunday.[7]

Epistle of Barnabas – 115 A.D. This letter was not written by the disciple mentioned in the book of Acts, but its existence was known in the early part of the second century. In this *Epistle* (15:9) the writer cites Isaiah 1:13 and comments on it:

> *Incense is vain abomination unto Me, and your new moons and Sabbaths I cannot endure. He has, therefore, abolished*

5 *Documents of the Christian Church,* Edited by Henry Bettenson, London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1963, pp. 4, 5.

6 Wilbur F. Crafts, *The Sabbath for Man,* New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1885, p. 550.

7 Willy Rordorf, *Sunday–The History of the Day of Rest,* p. 255.

these things. . . .Wherefore we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day, also, on which Jesus rose from the dead.[8]

The term "eighth day" is another way of stating the first day of the week, a phrase familiar from John 20:26.[9] This also is the name of the day celebrated by early Christians at the end of the first century A.D. The connection between this day of celebration and the Resurrection of Jesus is clear.

Justin Martyr – 140 A.D. One of the most famous of the early Christian writers is Justin Martyr. In one of his treatises, *First Apology*, we find an early statement mentioning Sunday. Justin presented his *Apology* to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, in which he said:

On the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we have before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying, Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks has been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons.[10]

This early account of a Sunday service is not so different from what we would find in most Christian churches today on Sunday morning. There is the assembling together in one place or building, the scriptures are read, prayers are made, a communion service and other similar acts. Afterwards Justin gives the reasons Christians had for meeting together on Sunday. He asserts that the Christians by their weekly Sunday worship could easily remember that Christ had risen on a Sunday:

8 *The Ante-Nicene Fathers,* Edited by Alexander Roberts, Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1973, vol. I, p. 147.

9 "The 'eighth day' is to be explained by the ancient practice of inclusive reckoning." Hutton Webster, *Rest Days,* (1916) p. 267, note 5.

10 *Apology* 1:67, from Wilbur Crafts, *The Sabbath for Man,* (1885) p. 550.

Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead (ibid.).

Thus Sunday, or the first day of the week, was a day which Christians held sacred and assembled together on because it was the day of the Resurrection—the Lord's Day. Justin Martyr also mentioned Sunday in his *Dialogue with Trypho,* 155 A.D., in which he twice calls it the "eighth day," and once "the first of all the days of the [weekly] cycle."

Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth – 170 A.D. In the latter half of the second century Bishop Dionysius of Corinth wrote a letter to Bishop Soter of Rome stating that the Corinthians had celebrated the "Lord's holy day." The letter is recorded by Eusebius and contains the following except:

To-day we kept the Lord's holy day, in which we have read your epistle; which in reading we shall always have our minds stored with admonition, as we shall also from that written to us before by Clement.[11]

By the contents of this letter, we clearly have to think in terms of an exercise taking place on every Sunday rather than on merely one Sunday in the year. From these communications it is apparent that the title of 'the Lord's day' was by 170 A.D., used in both Corinth and Rome, and in all likelihood, had been applied habitually throughout all Christendom.

Melito, Bishop of Sardis – 170 A.D. In this year Melito composed a treatise titled, *"On the Lord's Day,"* which was doubtless suggested by the fact of the universal observance of the day by the Christians of that time.[12]

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons – 177 A.D. This noted Church father lived in Gaul. He was the disciple of that eminent Christian martyr, Polycarp, and Polycarp was a companion of the Apostles. The testimony of Irenaeus concerning the Jewish

11 Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, book iv, chap. xxiii, p. 11.

12 Horace Cowan, *The Sabbath in Scripture and History,* Beacon Hill Press, 1948, p. 176; Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.,* book iv, chap. 26, page 2.

Sabbath and the Lord's Day shows that in his day they were separate days of observance. Irenaeus was of the opinion that the Sabbath was symbolic, but he endorsed an epistle to Victor, Bishop of Rome, in which it was stated:

> *The mystery of the Lord's Resurrection may not be celebrated on any other day than the Lord's Day, and on this alone should we observe the breaking off of the Paschal Fast.*[13]

Irenaeus once wrote to an Alexandrian to the effect that, "It is right, with respect to the feast of the resurrection, that we should celebrate it upon the first day of the week."[14]

The Apostolic Constitutions – 180-250 A.D. This work is a collection of eight books of various manuscripts, writings and fragments of papyrus compiled by a person named Arian of Palestine in the fourth century. Some of the words within these ancient books are purported to have emanated from the Apostles. The books mainly deal with prescribing rules for Church government, and for the order of divine service. The contents of one of its documents reads as follows:

> *On the day of the resurrection of the Lord, that is, the Lord's day, assemble yourselves together without fail, giving thanks to God and praising Him for those mercies God has bestowed upon you through Christ."*[15]

Other sections also mention the Lord's day. In one section it says Christians are forbidden to *"celebrate the day of the resurrection of our Lord on any other day than a Sunday"* (Bk. 5, Sect. 3, Para. 17). In Paragraph 19, the first day of the week is four times called *the Lord's day*. The Apostolic Canons also mention the *Sabbath,* but as being secondary to the Lord's day.

Bardesanes – 188 A.D. Bardesanes belonged to the sect of Gnostic Christians, which was numerous in the East, and which claimed a higher knowledge of spiritual truth than the orthodox Christians. But they did not differ from other Christians in their recognition of the Lord's day. Their leader,

13 J. Hessey, *Sunday: Its Origin, History & Present Obligation* (1880) p. 45.

14 Wilbur Crafts, *The Sabbath for Man,* p. 551.

15 Book 7, Section 2, Paragraph 30.

Bardesanes, stated that: *"On one day, the first day of the week, we assemble ourselves together."*[16] This shows that the formal observance of the Lord's Day was generally observed in the East, as well as in the West.[17]

Clement of Alexandria – 192 A.D. Clement in his writings uses the title of the Lord's Day with reference to "the eighth day." As it was common usage to speak of the natural day, he no doubt means Sunday. He speaks of the Lord's Day as a well-known and customary Festival, and as a recognized Christian ordinance, quite distinct from the Jewish Sabbath which was no longer followed by them.[18] For as he states: *"The old seventh day has become nothing more than a working day."*[19] The Lord's Day was often used as a rest day instead.

Tertullian – 200 A.D. The writings of this Latin church father are well known. Tertullian, who was born in Carthage in 160 A.D., "informs us more correctly than any other writer respecting the Christian doctrines of his time. He was held in very high esteem by subsequent fathers of the church."[20] He expresses the idea that the Sabbath was figurative of rest from sin, and typical of man's final rest in God. He mentions the Lord's Day as Sunday, and separates it from the Jewish Sabbath:

> *On Sunday we give to joy. We have nothing to do with Sabbaths or the other Jewish Festivals, much less with those of the Heathen. We have our own solemnities, the Lord's Day, for instance, and Pentecost. As the Heathen confine themselves to their Festivals and do not observe ours, let us confine ourselves to ours and not meddle with those belonging to them.*[21]

16 Wilber Crafts, *The Sabbath for Man,* p. 551.

17 Horace G. Cowan, *The Sabbath in Scripture and History,* Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1948, p. 178.

18 James Hessey, *Sunday,* (1880), p. 46.

19 George L. Rose, *Our Day of Rest,* Rose Pub. Co., 1946, p. 87.

20 Cowan, *The Sabbath in Scripture and History,* p. 179. Quoting, *Anthon's Classical Dictionary..*

21 James Hessey, *Sunday,* (1880), p. 47.

In his writing titled *Apologeticus* (Sect. 16), Tertullian reveals that Sunday was a common day of worship which is not at all related to the pagan practice of sun worship or that of Saturn worship:

> *In the same way if we devote Sunday to rejoicing, from a far different reason than sun-worship, we have some resemblance to those of you who devote the day of Saturn [Saturday] to ease and luxury, though they, too, go far away from the Jewish ways, of which indeed they are ignorant. . . . We observe the day of the Lord's resurrection laying aside our worldly business.*[22]

It is thus clear that Sunday was observed by Christians at that early date, but Saturday was not. By this quote we find evidence of a rest or cessation from worldly business on the Lord's Day. The day of Sunday was regarded as a Sabbath just as Saturday was so held by the Jews. This is the same Saturday Sabbath that was observed in Judea at the time of Christ and which He had never sanctioned. Like Christ, Tertullian in his writings rejects Jewish observances and practices and promotes those that are Godly.

> *We neither accord with the Jews in their peculiarities in regard to food, nor in their sacred days.*[23]

Minucius Felix – 210 A.D. This person wrote a dialogue between a Christian and a Heathen called "Octavius," in which it is stated: *"The Christians come together to a repast [a meal] on a solemn day."*[24] This day is Sunday as **Commodian** (250 A.D.) also spoke of the *Lord's Day* as a solemn day for a meal.

Fabian, Bishop of Rome – 236 A.D. This third century Christian leader of the church in Rome wrote a letter (*Epist.* 1) in which he speaks of Christian institutions:

> *As we have received the institutions from our fathers, we maintain seven deacons in the city of Rome, distributed over seven districts of the state, who attend to the services enjoined*

22 George L. Rose, *Our Day of Rest,* Rose Pub. Co., 1946, p. 87.

23 Horace Cowan, *The Sabbath in Scripture and History,* p. 180.

24 James Hessey, *Sunday,* p. 48.

> *on them week by week, and on the Lord's days, and solemn festivals.*[25]

Origen – 240 A.D. One of the ablest and most learned of the early Christian fathers was Origen (185-253 A.D.) of Alexandria. Origen's defense of Christianity against Celsus was one of the most notable literary productions of that age from the Christian point of view. Regarding whether it is proper for Christians to observe the Lord's Day he says:

> But if any should object against this what takes place amongst ourselves on the Lord's Day, or on preparation days, or on the days of the Passover or of Pentecost, the answer is that the perfect Christian, who continually lives in the words, and works, and thoughts of the Word of God, his natural Lord, continually lives in his day, and daily keeps a Lord's Day.[26]

The reply of Origen against Celsus establishes the fact that the Lord's Day was well known and observed by the Christians in the early years of the third century. It needed no explanation or apology at that time, and was treated by Origen as a matter of fact, handed down from earlier times, even from the days of the Apostles.[27] He specifically singles out the Jewish Sabbath as being something that was not passed on to Christians to keep:

> *As for the Sabbath, it has passed away as a matter of obligation (as everything else purely Jewish has passed away), though its exemplary and typical lessons are evident still.*[28]

The word 'Sabbath' as used by Origen and other early writers, always had reference to the Judaic last day of the week Sabbath, which was started in Judea at the time of the return of the Exiles from Babylon. It is this Sabbath that has "passed away" from God's true Israel people, the white Christian peoples; but was retained by the rejected people known as Jews, who adhere to it to this day. Again in the same vain Origen says:

> *John the Baptist was born to make ready a people for the Lord, a people fit for Him at the end of the Covenant now*

25 Wilbur Crafts, *The Sabbath for Man,* p. 552.

26 Cowan, op. cit. p. 181.

27 Cowan, op. cit., p. 181.

28 Hessey, op. cit., p. 48, note 125.

grown old, which is the end of the [Jewish] Sabbath. . . .It is one of the marks of a perfect Christian to keep the Lord's Day (ibid.).

The Lord's day was then a well known observance and had already replaced the Judaic Sabbath, yet many other things that were truly Israelite continued on, as Origen states:

We ourselves are accustomed to observe certain days, as, for example, the Lord's day, the Preparation, the Passover, or the Pentecost.[29]

It was obviously well known what had occurred in Judea at the time of Christ, and it was but logical for Christians to reject the traditions and other practices of the people who rejected Christ, or those customs which Christ never endorsed, such as the Sabbath that was then practiced.

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage – 253 A.D. This writer was a man of distinguished learning and piety, and noted as a martyr for the faith of Christ. There is no doubt he kept Sunday as a sacred day and defended it. In his *Epistle* 64, he said:

Because the eighth day, that is, the day after the [Jewish] Sabbath, was to be that on which the Lord should rise again, and should quicken us, and give us circumcision of the Spirit; the eighth day, that is, the first day after the Sabbath, being the Lord's Day which went before in the figure.[30]

This passage has greater authority because of the fact it occurs in a synodical epistle, emanating not from Cyprian merely, but also from his sixty-six colleagues in his Third Council of Carthage, A.D. 253.[31]

Anatolius, Bishop of Laodicea – 270 A.D. Anatolius stands as a very material witness for the early Christian observance of the first day of the week as the Lord's day. Laodicea was one of the seven churches of Asia to which the Apostle John was commissioned to write (Rev. 1:11), and was doubtless established by the Apostle Paul (Col. 4:14, 16). It is

29 Wilbur Crafts, *The Sabbath for Man,* (1885) p. 552.

30 Cowan, op. cit. p. 182.

31 James Hessey, *Sunday,* p. 49.

therefore reasonable to believe that the practices of the people at this church with regard to the day of worship, and other church usages, were those taught them by the apostles.

Anatolius had prepared a series of episcopal canons, in which he speaks of the Lord's Day:

7th. *The obligation of the Lord's resurrection binds us to keep the Paschal festival on the Lord's day.*

10th. *The solemn festival of the resurrection of the Lord can be celebrated only on the Lord's day.*

16th. *Our regard for the Lord's resurrection which took place on the Lord's day will lead us to celebrate it on the same principle.*[32]

The Laodiceans kept the Lord's Day (first day of the week) in harmony with Pauline and Johannine instruction and example. This was apparently so since its founding. While the church at Laodicea was censured by the Lord (Rev. 3:14-18), for some conditions that prevailed there contrary to Christian doctrine, Sabbath breaking was not one of them. If the failure to keep the Sabbath on the last day of the week, and the keeping of a special day on Sunday, was a serious breach, this would have been a good opportunity to rebuke them of that sin. Apparently the Laodiceans were not guilty of any sinful conduct in keeping the Lord's day and ignoring the Judaic Sabbath.

Victorinus – 290 A.D. Victorinus was a martyr and Bishop of Petabio in Pannonia, (now Pettau in Styria). He makes a comment contrasting the Lord's day with the Sabbath.

On the Lord's day we go forth to our bread with the giving of thanks. Lest we should appear to observe any Sabbath with the Jews, which Christ Himself the Lord of the Sabbath in His body abolished.[33]

Council of Eliberis – 305 A.D. This local council was formed to resolve certain problems in the church at Eliberis. The council had "very strenuously promoted religious worship

32 Cowan, *The Sabbath in Scripture and History,* p. 183-84, quoting: D.M. Canright, *The Lord's Day from Neither Catholic nor Pagan,* p. 150.

33 George Rose, Our Day of Rest, (1946), p. 87.

on the Lord's Day, and threatened suspension from communion to any person living in a town who shall absent himself for three Lord's Days from church."[34]

Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea – 315 A.D. Eusebius lived in Palestine (Caesarea) and is well known for his valuable *"Ecclesiastical History,"* in which much of the early Christian era is recorded. Since he is the author of the first history of the Christian Church (aside from the writer of Acts), he is called "the Father of Church History." He mentions the Lord's Day as a festival well known even in the time of Irenaeus (c. 170 A.D.). On the subject of the Lord's Day he stated:

> *All things whatsoever was the duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord's Day.*[35]

He also wrote in his *History* regarding the Ebionites, a sect which kept both the Judaic Sabbath and the Lord's Day, stating:

> *They also observe the Sabbath and other discipline of the Jews just like them; but on the other hand, they also celebrate the Lord's Day very much like us* (ibid.).

When Irenaeus reported of the Ebionites at his time no mention was made of a Sunday observance. This seems to indicate that some Judahites desired to join the main body of Christendom by adopting the Sunday observance in addition to their own familiar observance of the Sabbath.

Eusebius had also written a "Commentary on the Psalms." He notes that the 92nd Psalm has reference to a sabbath, and refers it to the *Lord's day*, saying that *"it exhorts to those things which are to be done on resurrection day."* He asserts that the Jews violated and rejected the original Sabbath and then writes:

> The Word (Christ), by the New Covenant, translated and transferred the feast of the Sabbath to the morning light, and gave us the symbol of true rest—the saving Lord's Day, the first (day) of the light, in which the Saviour obtained the victory over death. . . .On this day, which is the first (day) of light, . . .we assemble, after an interval of six days, and

34 James Hessey, *Sunday: Its Origin, History, & Present Obligation,* p. 81.

35 George Rose, *Our Day of Rest,* p. 88.

> celebrate holy and spiritual Sabbaths, even all nations redeemed by him throughout the world, and do those things according to the spiritual law, which were decreed for the priests to do on the Sabbaths.[36]

By these words of Eusebius we see that the Lord's Day, the first day, was observed by Christians not only as a day or worship but also as a Sabbath. This was done not only in his locality, but "even (by) all nations redeemed by him (Christ) throughout the world." The Jews kept the seventh day of the week, but Christians everywhere kept the first—*the Lord's Day.*

Constantine – 321 A.D. Constantine became the first Christian Roman Emperor, being converted during a battle in 312 A.D., in which he believed he won by Divine Providence. His father was favorably disposed toward the Christians and his mother was a Christian of distinguished piety.

Constantine's edict prescribing rest on Sunday is the first legal sanction by a civil authority for the observance of that day. The edict issued in 321 A.D. is stated as follows:

> *On the venerable day of the sun let all the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in the work of cultivation may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often happens that another day is not so suitable for grain-sowing or for vine-planting; lest be neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost.* Given, the seventh day of March.[37]

Constantine had to contend with an empire in which there was a great mixture of religions, though primarily consisting of Paganism and Christianity. As he favored the Christians, he selected a day of rest for the whole Empire, though which was already regarded by the Christians as a Festival of Divine institution; and calling it by its civil name, as one which the Christians were well acquainted with.[38]

36 James Gilfillan, *The Sabbath,* American Tract Society, 1862, p. 384; also Cowan, op. cit., pp. 184-85.

37 *Documents of the Christian Church,* Ed., Henry Bettenson, 1963, p. 26.

38 Hessey, *Sunday: Its Origin & History,* pp. 63-64.

But on the other hand, the edict had nothing distinctively Christian in it, and as such would not offer any significant objection by the Pagans in the Empire. It did provided the Pagans with uniformity in their Festivals, and remedied certain inconveniences for their legal purposes.

The Roman calendar at the time had an occasional eighth day of the week called *nundinae,* or the market day when the country people ceased from farm work and went into the cities for purposes of trade. This day was made to synchronize with the Christian Lord's Day. It was, therefore, Constantine's edict which first introduced the week of a consistent seven days as a civil measure of time in the Roman Empire. The willingness of the Christians, who were mostly in the cities, to submit to the ordinance, is an evidence that rest from their ordinary labors on the day of their religious assemblies—the Lord's Day—was no new thing to them.

The Nicene Council – 325 A.D. At the beginning of the fourth century a dispute arose as to the exact relationship of Jesus Christ to God the Father. Arius, a presbyter of Alexander, Egypt, had taught that Christ was not of the same substance with the Father, but that he was a creature, though the chief of all created beings, and in reality neither God nor man. Arius was a talented man and popular with the clergy and people, and thus gained a large following in his doctrine.

The "Arian" doctrine was countered by the young Alexandrian priest Athanasius, who declared that Arius had denied the divinity of Christ. Partisans defended both sides, and the quarrel grew and so embittered many on each side that an appeal was made to the Emperor (Constantine) to give a decision on the matter. Constantine was reluctant to interfere, but realizing that some steps must be taken if there was to be any order at all in the Church or Empire, he summoned a Council to meet at Nicaea to consider the question.

With the style and procedure of the Roman senate in mind, Constantine commissioned 318 bishops from all parts of the Christian world to settle the controversy raised by Arius. Also

in attendance were some fourteen hundred clergy representing provinces from Persia to Spain. The meetings were long and stormy; but the eloquence of Athanasius decided the case against Arius. The Council proceeded to draw up a creed, known as the "Nicene Creed," to express their exact views regarding the divinity of Jesus and other matters. The Nicene Council had also excommunicated Arius and his followers, determined a unified way of reckoning the date of Easter, and issued twenty disciplinary decrees or canons.

This formation and results of this council marked the start of the Nicene era in Christian history which was to have a considerable influence on the future of Christianity and upon European civilization. Many of the ideas and doctrines established are recognized up to the present day.

The interest here is centered, however, in the attitude and influence brought about by the Nicene period concerning the Sabbath, Sunday and the Lord's Day. First, we need to look at what the Council itself said, then continue the chronological examination of history in regards to these subjects.

Among the canons drafted, the Council spoke of the Lord's Day (Can. xx), but not as a thing newly invented, or which then had its title or observance questioned. It said that on the Lord's Day, and during Pentecost, persons are to pray standing—a custom more or less already prevalent. It also decided which Sunday of the year Easter was to be celebrated on, and appointed other significant ceremonies to be kept upon the Lord's Day.

Council of Laodicea – 363 A.D. This was a local council or *synod* as is sometimes stated, as opposed to the universal or *ecumenical* council as held earlier at Nicaea. It was attended by thirty-two bishops from the province of Byzantine. By its 29th *Canon* the Council decreed:

> Christians ought not to act as Jews, and to rest from labor on the Sabbath [Saturday], but should work on that day; And, giving pre-eminent honor to the Lord's day, they ought then, if they can, to rest from labor.[39]

39 Rev. James Gilfillan, *The Sabbath,* American Tract Society, p. 384.

The wording 'to act as Jews' is something rendered, 'to Judaize,' and is taken as an admonition not to act as those who were known as "Jews" at the time of Christ. This Judaizing included the practice of observing the Sabbath on the last day of the week. So here we have another clear distinction between the Lord's Day and the Saturday Sabbath practice—it was not a new thing at this time as many Seventh Day Adventists try to claim.

Valentinian – 368 A.D. This Emperor, along with Emperor Valens, had published an edict which prohibited the collection of debts owed by Christians on Sunday.

Theodosius I – 386 A.D. Theodosius I, often called Theodosius the Great, had prohibited all business and shows on Sunday. He also prohibited trials before arbitrators on Sunday; and with the added declaration that violation of the sacred rites of religion should be considered not only infamous but sacrilegious "on the day of the Sun, which our fathers rightly named the Lord's Day."[40] Later (392 A.D.) he extended the prohibition to contests, game spectacles and horse races.

Augustine – 395 A.D. He was the Bishop of Hippo Regius in North Africa. He spoke of the Sabbath in a spiritual sense, but spoke of "the Lord's Day and certain other days as Christian institutions." In his works (36th Epistle, et. al) Augustine "asserts the primitive observance of the Lord's Day, and its connection with the Resurrection."[41]

Chrysostom – 398 A.D. This early Christian Father was Bishop of Constantinople. He solemnly warns Christians against Sabbatizing with the Jews, and refers to 1 Cor. 16:2 as sanctioning the Lord's Day.

Jerome – 400 A.D. Jerome is the famed monk and Bible scholar who live from 340 to 420 A.D. He is also called by the name of Hieronymus which is his birth name. Jerome is most noted as the author of the Latin *Vulgate* version of the

40 Hessey, *Sunday: Its Origin, History & Present Obligation,* (1880), p. 84.

41 Ibid., pp. 75, 76.

Bible, which became the Bible of the whole western church in the Middle Ages. It will be admitted, that Jerome was highly proficient in the knowledge of the versions and style of the sacred writings. He explains the words, "the first day of the week," by the words, "the Lord's day."[42] Commenting on the verse 24 in Psalms 118, *"this is the day which the Lord hath made,"* Jerome says: *"The Lord's day, the day of the Resurrection, the day of Christians, our day."*[43]

Honorius – 408 A.D. On this date the Emperor Honorius and Theodosius II issued an act which reinstated the ban on trials on Sundays, but allowed judges to proceed against robbers and pirates on Sundays in order to prevent the failure of justice, and promote public safety. This has been regarded as a part of the common law of England by Lord Mansfield.

Leo I and Anthemius – 469 A.D. A law issued by the Byzantine emperor Leo I and Anthemius, "emperor of the east," recognized the Lord's Day as a judicial day of rest:

> The Lord's Day we decree to be ever so honored and revered, that it should be exempt from all compulsory process: let no summons urge any man; let no one be required to to give security for the payment of a fund held by him in trust; let the sergeants of the courts be silent; let the pleader cease his labors; let that day be a stranger to trials. . . "[44]

This law also contains concepts later found in the English common law, and so also of the United States.

Conclusion. This chronological listing of events testifying to the recognition and observance of the Lord's Day, or Sunday, takes us to the point where we started—with the Saxon kings of Europe and the formation of the Anglo-Saxon common law.

There are many other historical facts which show that early Christians gave pre-eminence to the Lord's Day, the first of the week, over the Judaic Sabbath day; and had exclusively

42 James Gilfillan, *The Sabbath,* American Tract Society, 1862, p. 381.

43 F.H. Colson, *The Week,* Cambridge University Press, 1926, pp. 93-94.

44 Cowan, *The Sabbath in Scripture and History,* p. 209.

recognized the observance of Sunday, and never Saturday, as the "Lord's Day," that special day of worship and assembly which started with the Apostles.

Those who assert that the true Sabbath is on Saturday, must also come to the conclusion that the early Christian Fathers, many of whom were instructed by the Apostles, were in gross error by rejecting Saturday and following the Lord's Day instead. They have to assert that Christianity has had an illegitimate beginning and foundation, and that God never had his hand in guiding the early Christians in this area. Those who follow the Babylonian "seventh day of the week" Sabbath really don't know the history previously covered. This only shows how misguided they are in their belief on the Sabbath.

The learned Church historian John Von Mosheim (1750) held that the Lord's Day and the Sabbath were perfectly distinct institutions, and that the latter, which was a peculiarity of Judaism, has entirely passed away from Christendom. And he held also, that the Lord's Day is so thoroughly traceable to the Apostles, and so proved by the consistency of the testimony concerning it, as to be an institution of their founding under inspired guidance. [45]

The Judaic Sabbath did not immediately die with all early Christians. Some for a time followed it along with the Lord's Day. But most observed the Lord's Day as a sabbath, though they did not call it as such so as not to confuse it with the well known Judaic Sabbath. The early Christians, being Israelites, desired to separate themselves from the strict, Pharisaical religion that prevailed in Judea, the religion which condemned Jesus. They thus said they no longer follow the Jewish Sabbath but rather the Lord's Day, just as Americans in the 1780's would say we no longer follow the English Monarchy, but follow a Republican form of government. The Resurrection of Christ, like the American Revolution for Independence, marked off a new and better condition for the people, and they clearly wanted to separate themselves to the old, oppressive ways.

45 See his *Ecclesiastical History,* Vol. I, pp. 85-135.

8

WAS THE SABBATH CHANGED?

For the past two or three centuries the subject of the sabbath has centered around debates of whether the Sabbath has been changed, and whether such change is God ordained or not. This is perhaps the main point upon which most of the Sabbath debates and arguments hinge upon, and one of the main points for most of the confusion surrounding the subject. Some of the issues raised and arguments debated on each side are:

- That the Sabbath day was transferred from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week by Jesus.
- That the Sabbath was changed by the Catholic church from Saturday to Sunday.
- That the Sabbath was given to the Jews, but as they rejected Christ, God has changed His chosen people to the Gentiles, who are not bound to the Sabbath.
- That the Sabbath was under the law but the Lord's Day is under grace, so the Sabbath is not obligatory for us.
- That no change can be made in the Sabbath, for their can be "nothing new under the sun," and because "God does not change." Therefore, we must adhere to the Sabbath exactly as given to Israel.

Each of these points are based in error or half truths, because those who made them had a misunderstanding of either law, race, history or the ways of God.

THE RESTORATION OF THE ISRAELITE SABBATH

There was in fact a change in the original Hebrew Sabbath. This occurred when the Judahites returned from the Babylonian

captivity. While in Babylon, they had adopted some of the Babylonian concepts of the calendar and sabbath, such as new months. If such a drastic change as having all new names of the months could occur, then it is plausible that a change in the Sabbath day could also occur. The evidence is clear that the post-exilic Jews used a lunar-solar calendar, and had observed the seventh day of the week instead of the first day of the week. This hybrid Sabbath was adapted to the Roman calendar and prevailed at the time of Christ. So here we have a *"change"* in Israel's original Sabbath, a change which so many have missed. But this was actually suppose to happen, for God had prophesied that the Sabbath would cease with Israel:

> I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts (**Hosea 2:11**, see also Isa. 1:13-14).

This prophecy of Israel's Sabbath ceasing coincides with God's divorcement of Israel —"for she [Israel] is not my [God's] wife, neither am I her husband" (Hos. 2:2). God had divorced Israel due to her whoredoms and idolatry. Thus God put them into the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity. This is when the Sabbath "ceased" in Israel's history. But Hosea and other prophets also spoke of God's promise to restore Israel's relationship and status after their time of punishment was over with.[1] It was when this relationship was renewed that Israel would again have God's Sabbath, which became the day that white Christian Israelites have followed—the Lord's Day.

Now it is quite true that the Lord's Day or Sunday Sabbath was a *change* or departure from the Sabbath which existed in New Testament times. But it was not a departure from the principle of the original Hebrew Sabbath. This then is where the crux of the confusion centers around, for most have thought the Sabbath spoken of in the New Testament is the Sabbath of God. It was not, but was a Babylonianized-Hebrew Sabbath. It is this point that has caused millions to misinterpret the Sabbath issue. Just as God restored Israel to her status as God's wife and chosen people with the New Covenant, so too He

1 Hosea 1:10-11; 2:23; 14:1-5; Jer. 46: 27-28; Micah 7:18-20.

restored the Sabbath to Israel by that Covenant. The Sabbath *ceased* with the divorcement of Israel, and it was *restored* in the resurrection of Jesus Christ — on *the Lord's Day*. It was a part of Israel's punishment that her relationship to God as well as her Sabbath would cease. When was the Sabbath to be restored to her? The same time Israel was remarried to God. It was when Israel would be made clean again by the blood of Christ.

The resurrection of Christ clearly ushered in a new era and order for Israel. The Sunday Sabbath was a part of that renewed blessing upon Israel, as it was a return to the principle of the Sabbath on the first day of the week as God had originally assigned it. This means that the Sabbath which prevailed in Judea in the five centuries before Christ was not the true and lawful Sabbath ordained by God. The Sunday Sabbath (the Lord's Day) was suppose to be a departure from the Babylonianized Sabbath that existed in Judea. It was part of God's prophesy and promise which He fulfilled. Thus the Lord's Day was not a creation of "man's law," but instead was a fulfillment of prophecy, it was a return to the true and original principles of the Sabbath God gave Israel.

It was by Divine Providence that the early Christians embraced and followed the Lord's Day, gradually giving it greater importance and reverence in their lives. God was working through His people at the beginning of the Christian era, moving them to establish the "Lord's Day" as a precedent in the history and the law of Christian culture and civilization. In like manner He had guided and moved His people, the white Christian people, to establish the Sunday Sabbath in America so as to make it a part of their culture and fundamental law— the law of the land.

The Lord's Day, like Christianity itself, was rather insignificant in the first century A.D. But like the "mustard seed," they grew in prominence and popularity among God's true Israel people—the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic-Gothic people of Europe. It is certain that neither Christianity nor the Lord's Day (Sunday Sabbath) could have become much of anything without the support and guidance of Divine Providence.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE LORD'S DAY

In the attempt to support Saturday as the Sabbath, many erroneous and groundless arguments have been raised against the Lord's Day or Sunday. There is the argument that the **Catholic Church** changed the Sabbath. This statement is based on shear ignorance of early Christian history. No one has yet discovered or made known which Pope did this thing, or the date upon which it was done. In the early Christian era, there were bishops in the various cities (1 Tim. 3:1; Tit. 1:7; Philip. 1:1). The bishop at Rome was only one of many. Soon after Constantine removed the capital of the Empire from Rome to Constantinople in 330 A.D., the Bishop of Rome began to assume Papal proportions.[2] The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (vol X, p. 952) says the papacy was officially formed by Bishop Leo around 451 A.D. The title of Pope was actually first given to the Bishop of Rome (Gregory I) in 590 A.D. There thus was no Catholic Church in the first 400 years of the Christian era to change anything. The claim that the Roman Catholic Church changed the Sabbath seems to have been first put forth at the **Council of Trent,** January 18th, 1563, at a time when the Romanists were being hard pressed by the Protestants.[3]

Some say that **Constantine** changed the Sabbath day to Sunday. Constantine was born at a time when the Empire was divided up between different emperors. He became ruler over the areas of Spain, Gaul and Britain when his father died in 306 A.D. Constantine was then forced into war with the other emperors. He believed that the God of the Christians was on his side, for as he prepared for battle on the plains of Italy against vastly superior forces, he saw before him in the sky a shining cross and underneath the words "By this sign conquer!" At once he gave orders that his legions should place on their shields the sign of the cross and the initials of Christ in Greek,

2 In the year 416 A.D., Innocent I required all western churches to conform to the customs of the church of Rome.

3 George L. Rose, *Our Day of Rest,* Glendale: Rose Publishing Co., 1946, p. 92-94.

and he then advanced into battle. He was completely successful, the Roman army fled in confusion, Maxentius was slain, and Constantine entered the capital and became Emperor of the whole Western Europe. Soon after conquering Rome, Constantine published his famous **"Edict of Milan"** that allowed Christians liberty of worship and full civil rights as citizens. Lands and places of worship taken from them were restored. No longer were Christians regarded as criminals.[4]

Later Constantine's interest in the Christians and their faith deepened, and he showed them special favors. He confiscated some of the treasures of the temples and gave them over to the Church. When Constantine issued his decree for rest on Sunday in 321 A.D. (see pg. 105), he changed no church days. The decree simply added legality to the long established Christian custom of keeping the first day of their seven-day week. Nothing was said of a Sabbath or Sabbath day.

If the first day of the week or the 'Lord's day' is somehow pagan just because Constantine recognized it, then Christianity is pagan also because he had recognized that. Both Christianity and the Lord's day were already established and existing concepts by 321 A.D. This is another example of the inconsistency revealed by the "seventh day" advocates.

Another argument made by the Seventh Day Adventists and other "seventh day" advocates is that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday by the **Council of Laodicea** in 363 A.D. As was shown (pg. 107) this council did speak against the old Jewish Sabbath saying it should not be followed, and that honor should be given to the Lord's Day instead. This was hardly some new concept, for we have seen that since the time of Ignatius around 100 A.D., various Christian writers were distinguishing between what they knew as the "Sabbath" from the Lord's Day or first day of the week.[5] The Sabbath in the first four centuries was identified with that which the "Jews" followed in Judea

4 I. L. Plunket, *A History of Europe,* Oxford, 1927, pp. 27-29.

5 Many often see the word "Sabbath" and wrongly assume it must mean the Sabbath of God. Just as there is man's law, there is man's Sabbath.

since their return from the Exile. This, however, was not the same Sabbath that existed in the time of Moses or David. There is no doubt that some in the early Christian era had misconstrued the two Sabbaths as being the same, as many do today. The fact that the Sabbath spoken of in the Pentateuch is not the same Sabbath found in Judea after the Exile, is another missing key that has caused many to be misled about a *"change"* to Sunday.

Thus this Canon from Laodicea has inappropriately been the butt of criticism by the various "seventh day" advocates. The Council had said nothing new in regards to the Judaic Sabbath and the Lord's Day which had not been said before. Yet these Saturday keepers, instead of looking at all of the history, will only look at the distinction this one Council made between the "Sabbath" and the Lord's Day (first day of the week) and will say a "change" was made here. The fact that this distinction had been made during the 260 years prior to the Council at Laodicea by various Christian authorities, proves that such arguments are groundless and the whole cause must fail.

A NEW CALENDAR FOR ISRAEL

While most involved in the Sabbath issue have concentrated on the day and time of the Sabbath, only a few have raised the issue of the calendar. The calendar we use now, which is basically a Roman calendar, is not identical to the Hebrew calendar. But there are certain concepts of the Hebrew calendar which have been, by Divine Providence, adapted to our calendar and the Sunday Sabbath. Some of these principles are as follows:

- A calendar of 12 months and 365 "solar" days.
- A seven day week.
- A Sabbath cycle of six work days and one day of rest.
- A Sabbath on the first day of the week.

These principles of the old Hebrew calendar are followed in our Julian-Gregorian calendar system. But is this sufficient? Are we bound in any way to adopt and follow the original Hebrew calendar? If that calendar was given to Israel should

we not adopt it instead of the Julian-Gregorian calendar? This is actually the only sound and plausible argument one can really raise in the entire Sabbath issue, because this is the thing which was a "change" from the Israelite period. Was this change valid? The question is important because whatever calendar we have will determine the Sabbath day we have.

It is strange that those who support the Saturday Sabbath as being the true *Israelite Sabbath,* do not claim we should have the true *Israelite calendar.* Instead Saturday-Sabbath keepers place great stress upon keeping "the seventh day" of the week in the *Roman calendar,* as though it was commanded by God or was used in the Old Testament. They claim adherence to Old Testament law and the Old Testament Sabbath, but reject the Old Testament calendar and use a new calendar. This is another notable instance of the hypocrisy of the Saturday or "seventh day" Sabbath position. It is like saying we have to dress like the Israelites, but then only wear the shoes or sandals they wore while wearing modern day pants and shirt.

Others don't want Sunday because they think it is a part of Roman paganism. But they have no qualms about using other days of the Roman calendar which also had names adopted after the names of pagan gods. This includes Saturday, which is derived from the god of the planet Saturn. To reject a day on the basis it was once a pagan name while accepting another is a hypocritical position that cannot stand.

The question therefore is what calendar is to be used today. Some may say that the calendar, like the Sabbath, cannot change in any manner because "God does not change" (Mal. 3:6), and there can be "no new thing under the sun" (Eccl. 1:9). The universal interpretation applied to such verses has been the basis of much distortion in Scripture doctrine. By using this universal interpretation man has in effect put God in a straight jacket by saying He can not do any thing new and different with His people. If this type of interpretation is correct, then there can be no New Covenant, for that was something new and different. God has in fact promised that He would do or bring about many new and different things for Israel, such as:

- A new covenant (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:8; 10:16; 12:24).
- A new land (2 Sam. 7:10; 1 Chron. 17:9; Isa. 27:6).
- A new and living way (Heb. 10:20).
- A new heart (Ezek. 18:31; 36:26; Jer. 32:39).
- A new spirit (Ezek. 11:19; 18:31).
- A new name (Isa. 62:2), and language (Isa. 28:11).
- A new or changed priesthood (Heb. 7:12).
- A new man disposition (Eph. 2:15; 4:24; Col. 3:10).
- A new Jerusalem (Rev. 3:12; 21:2).
- A new heaven and a new earth (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; Rev. 21:1; 2 Peter 3:13).

These new things don't just mean something additional to Israel's destiny or which were merely added to our lives. They represent a change from a previous state, condition or way of doing things to a new and different one. But it is said, "God cannot change!" The interpretation is wrong for He in fact does change. When Moses was up at Mt. Sinai, the Israelites made a golden calf and an alter to sacrifice to it. God told Moses that He was going to unleash His "wrath" against them and "consume them" (Exod. 32:10). Moses had pleaded for Israel and thus God "repented of the evil which he thought to do to his people" (v. 14). In other words, God *changed* His mind.

God acknowledged that new things would occur (Isa. 42:9), that He Himself will do new things (Isa. 43:19; Jer. 31:22), and that He will show us newly created things which did not originally exist from the beginning (Isa. 48:6-7). The concept that God does not change refers to His unchanging nature of what He is, and that He still is a God of judgment, wrath, love, and forgiveness, and a God who keeps His promises. To say He can do nothing new and different is a great distortion. God had intended a new and better life and condition for His children as does any father. He gave them this by way of the New Covenant:

> *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new* (**2 Corinthians 5:17**).

> *And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said to me, Write: for these words are true and faithful* (**Revelation 21:5**).

Now of we apply a universal interpretation to these verses we could eliminate the law and all things in the Old Testament. But that is not what they mean. They convey the principles of the New Covenant. The New Covenant ushered in a new plan and status for God's people, while abandoning the old ones.[6]

But does this concept apply to the calendar? Can we rightfully and lawfully have a new calendar if God had given Israel in the Old Testament a different one? The calendar is essentially a unit of measurement. God had given Israel many units of measurement and had directed their use and application:

> Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall you have: I am the LORD your God (**Leviticus 19:36**).

> You shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath. The ephah and the bath shall be of one measure, that the bath may contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah the tenth part of an homer. And the shekel shall be twenty gerahs: twenty shekels, twenty-five shekels, and fifteen shekels shall be your maneh (**Ezekiel 45:10-12**).

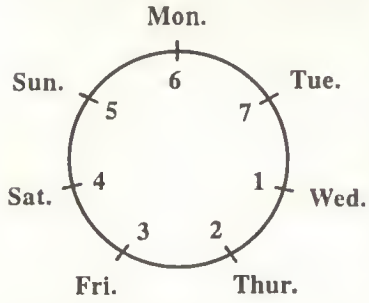
There are many other commands and directives that God gave which require the use of Hebrew units of weights and measurements.[7] But we don't use ephahs and shekels, we use inches and feet, ounces and pounds, and dollars and cents. As descendants of Israelites are we suppose to adhere to these units of measurement? Those who say we must follow all things God gave to Israel never say we are to go back to the units of measurement used by Israel. They use the *new* measurements without even a thought of returning to the *old* ones. This is another instance of their inconsistency. It is Pharisaical to say we must adhere to every aspect of the Old Testament ways.

6 Jesus Christ conveyed this idea in saying we should not try to put "new cloth on an old garment," or "put new wine in old bottles" (Matt. 9:16-17; Mark 2:21-22).

7 See Leviticus 27:3-25; Numbers 3:47; 7:13-86; 2 Kings 7:16; Isaiah 5:10; Ezekiel 4:10-11.

If there is no basis for adhering to these units of measurements, then there is no basis for adhering to the old Hebrew calendar. Further, we could never adopt it exactly like it was at the time of Moses. We only know of four of the names of the months, which means we would have to either use the Babylonian names, or make up new ones. We don't know what sort of leap year system they used if any, so we would have to devise one. We thus could never accurately or completely use the same calendar as used by the Israelites, nor do we need to; for God has given us a new calendar just as He has given us a new name, a new language, a new heart and a new land.

Another argument surrounds the order of the "six days" of work and "seventh day" of rest. The Sabbath system is a cyclical, closed-loop system, not a liner, open-ended system with concrete start and stop points. Like a circle it has no beginning and end points. Thus the belief that six work days were to start on the beginning of the week have no merit. The "seventh day" is the day *after* the "six days" and *before* them.



The Sabbath as a cyclical event could fall on any day of the week or cycle.

Much of the "seventh day" Sabbath argument is based on the so-called "creation week." After the "six days" of creation God had rested on "the seventh day," which God had "blessed" (Gen. 2:2-3). Since God had rested on and blessed "the seventh day" it is often said that this means Saturday, because it is the seventh day on our calendar. The blatant problem with this thinking is that God did not "work" and "rest" under the Gregorian calendar, or even the Hebrew calendar. There were no calendars, no months and no weeks. It is completely erroneous to try to overlay this "creation week" upon an arbitrary arrangement of days of the week in any calendar. If we were to change the calendar tomorrow so that Wednesday would be the first day of the week, and Tuesday the last or seventh day of the week, can it be said that Tuesday on that calendar was

the Sabbath according to the creation account in Genesis? or the original Sabbath cycle? or what God meant in Exod. 20:8-11?

Like the sabbath laws, the creation story conveys only a principle of six work days and one rest day. It tells of Adam being formed late on the "sixth day," so his first true day would have been on the "seventh day," the day of the first Sabbath God ordained. But as Jesus said the Sabbath was made for man. So God's Sabbath in Genesis 2:3 was the first Sabbath for man or Adam. Immediately after Adam was created, he had a Sabbath and he then worked six days. Thus the sequence of first working six days and then resting the last day was not what had existed at the beginning. God started man off with a Sabbath just as he started the calendar He gave Israel with a Sabbath. So if there is an original sabbath cycle, it would start with Adam's first day, which is also the start of the Jubilee cycles.

THE SABBATH AS A SIGN OF GOD'S PEOPLE

The sabbath day or cycle, like genealogies, cannot be directly traced back one link at a time to its original source. But, like the genealogies, the true and original Sabbath can be identified by the signs and prophetic marks which God has given in His word. Such signs and marks can be used to determine the real Sabbath or genealogy from the false one. God said that the Sabbath was to be a sign between God and Israel:

> 13. Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths you shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am the LORD that does sanctify you.
>
> 16. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant.
>
> 17. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever **(Exodus 31:13-17).**[8]

As with the other prophetic marks assigned to the Israel people, the Sabbath sign can be used to identify who the true

8 See also Ezekiel 20:12, 20.

Israel people are today. Since the Sabbath temporarily ceased at the captivity of God's people, it must have resumed with the advent of the New Covenant with Israel. The Christian West has kept the Sunday Sabbath (midnight to midnight) for nearly 2,000 years. The people known as "Jews" have kept the Saturday Sabbath (sunset to sunset) for the same time period.

The prophetic identifying marks were to point out what a certain race of people (the Israelites) would do in their history. These racial identifying marks can thus indicate what people on earth are Israelites. The white European peoples have followed or satisfied all of the prophetic signs and marks indicating they are the true descendants of the Israelites. But if Saturday (sunset to sunset) is the true God-ordained Sabbath, then it would serve as a countersign showing that they are not Israel. Also, if Saturday is the Sabbath, then there is support for the idea that the anti-Christ, hybrid people called "Jews" are God's chosen people. Yet it would be the only sign and identifying mark the Jews have indicating they are God's chosen people. This would be a strange inconsistency in the way God works.

Here then is another area of inconsistency and hypocrisy found with those hold to the Saturday Sabbath. They claim that they, as the white race, are the true Israel people based upon such identifying marks found in the Bible, but then reject one of the more prominent identifying marks of Israel—the Sabbath. By their claims of the Saturday Sabbath (sunset to sunset) they say the white race has failed in this sign from God. The Saturday Sabbath keepers in one sense put great emphasis on what the white race has done in history, showing they are Israel. But at the same time say that with the Sabbath issue it does not matter what the white race has done in history. The hypocrisy of this position stands as proof that Saturday as the Sabbath with the sunset to sunset division of the day are not ordained by God.

If one wishes to keep Saturday or Friday as the Sabbath, with the awkward sunset to sunset division of the day, then they can never again raise the issue that the white race bears the identifying marks and signs of Israel, for the white race has

generally never followed such things. It just is not consistent to say that all of the biblical signs and marks associated with Israel are found in the white race except the Sabbath sign.

Some have said that Israel lost this sign or was tricked out of it by observing Sunday. Such a statement borders on blasphemy. If God said it was going to be a sign then it will be so, and no one could trick Israel out of it or cause them to lose what God promised. God said Israel would lose track of their name and lineage, and they did. But He did not say the sign of the Sabbath would be lost, it only would cease for a time.

The consistency of God's providence as to the signs and marks He placed upon His people clearly indicate that Sunday (midnight to midnight) is the true Sabbath. This is as sure as the signs of being a great nation, a company of nations, and of colonizing new lands fit the white Christian people, and identifies them as the true Israelites.

Many want to focus on the idea of change regarding the Sabbath because they never can explain away the historical evidence that the Christian Fathers had observed the first day of the week rather than the last day. If Sunday observance is wrong, then these people would in effect have to trash the first 300 years of the Christian era and say the early Christian didn't know what they were doing. If the people of this era deliberately changed the true Sabbath, and introduced a pagan one, we would then have to seriously reconsider the validity of Christianity. This is because the oldest Bible texts we have came from these Christian Fathers, and we must ask what else they had changed.

Some Christian writers in trying to support Sunday have also said many erroneous and incorrect things regarding the Sabbath. Some have said that Jesus transferred the Sabbath to the Lord's Day. This erroneous remark is based on a misunderstanding of the difference between the original Sabbath and the Sabbath established after the Babylonian captivity.

In the early Christian era, it was clear that the first day of the week was not called the "Sabbath," but it gradually became a Sabbath in Christendom. Likewise, the seventh day of the

week, the Jewish Sabbath day, gradually lost all appeal to the early Christians, even outright rejection of it was made evident at an early stage. Why did they draw a line of distinction between the "Sabbath" and "the Lord's Day" in the second century? Because they knew Jesus never sanctioned or commanded that the Sabbath day which prevailed in Judea to be kept. It is also because those who fervently hated Jesus adhered to the last day of the week as a Sabbath, and in fact condemned Christ for violating that day and caused Him to be crucified because of it. Thus this Judaic Sabbath on the last day of the week was to the early Christians a curse and not a blessing.

This cursed Sabbath remained with a cursed people, the Jews, who now, through miscegenation, are no longer true Hebrew people. However, the true Israelites or God's chosen people, the white Christian people, had observed and held sacred the Lord's Day, the day that was destined to be God's Sabbath restored to His people. The Lord's Day, like the Sabbath of the Old Testament, fell on the first day of the week, not the last day; and it was this first day of the week which the Israelite Christians observed in the first three centuries of the Christian era.

The subject of race then is another area which has cause many to misunderstand the Sabbath issue. One must understand who or what is a Jew. While anyone in Judea at the time of Christ could be called a Jew, most of the Judahites were at that time true Hebrews. But the Judahites who rejected Christ and persecuted Him were rejected by God, and lost their birthright through intermixture with other races. It is these people who became part of the mongrel people called "Jews" today, and like there forebearers, they do not follow the ways of God including His Sabbath. The Saturday Sabbath is a sign of a cursed and rejected people.

The white European people, the true descendants of Israel, have no obligation to follow the Babylonian seventh day of the week Sabbath which prevailed at the time of Christ. For God never gave that type of sabbath to His people, and Jesus never endorsed such a sabbath.

9

CONCLUSIONS

THE KEYS OF THE SABBATH ISSUE

Many will no doubt after reading this material ask; how is it that millions of people over the centuries have missed the fact that the Hebrew Sabbath fell upon the first of the week? How is it that millions have never understood that "seventh day" is not talking about a day of the week? And How could millions have failed to identify the Sabbath at the time of Christ as Babylonian in nature? In reply we could ask; how is it that for centuries millions of people have read the word "Israel" in the Bible and have always thought it obviously and logically meant the mongrel people known as "Jews?"

The Sabbath issue is much like the Israel-Identity issue, in which millions of people have been deceived by what they thought was the *apparent* meaning of 'Israel' or 'Jew,' but were dead wrong. Likewise, millions over the centuries have been deceived by the term "seventh day" believing it to mean Saturday, but were dead wrong. Why have so many been unable to see beyond the apparent meaning of such words? It has to do with the way people think, and how that thinking is not the same as the ways in which God thinks and works (Isa. 55:8).

This material has examined the issue of the Sabbath in view of four key areas of information and truth. These areas are that of law, history, race, and the ways of God. All four sources are needed to unravel the Sabbath issue, and a lack of even one will handicap anyone who has attempted to solve this issue. All writers and commentators on this subject in the past have been deficient in one or more of these areas which has prevented the truth of the Sabbath from being revealed.

If we look at the Israel-Identity truth we should realize that it could never be revealed by the Bible only. It required a study

of history and a knowledge of racial backgrounds and migrations to help solve that puzzle. Likewise, the question of the origins of life and the universe can never be answered by the Bible only, as we need biology, astronomy and geology to aid us in the answer. Likewise, the Sabbath issue is an issue which can never be solved by using only the Bible.

The truth, knowledge and ways of God are not limited to one single book called the Bible. If they are then He is not much of a God. Those who have made the Sabbath issue one of the Bible only, ignoring the key areas of history, law and race, have revealed themselves by their hypocrisy and blatant errors. The Pharisees also were very religious, and tried to answer matters from the perspective of their religion alone, causing great error, hypocrisy and blindness to the true ways of God.

We must look at other areas such as history. In 1873, the Seventh-Day Adventist writer J.N. Andrews attempted to explain away and discredit the historical evidence, but he had made so many obvious blunders and unsupported assumptions that the work has never been regarded as authoritative.[1]

Most people have been misguided by the idea of a change in the Sabbath law, missing the obvious fact that the people of Judah, Levi and Benjamin had undergone a change in religion while in the Babylonian Exile. No one really denies that the Scribes, Pharisees and people at the time of Christ had a lot of Babylonian concepts and traditions. When you change a people's religion you ultimately change their law and institutions. It was here that the Sabbath changed, but most look at the Christian departure from this Babylonian Sabbath to the *Lord's Day* and foolishly say, "the Sabbath was changed!" This was more correctly a restoration of God's Sabbath. Look at who followed the Lord's Day as the Sabbath—the white Christian people, the true heirs and descendants of Israel. Look at who followed Saturday (sunset to sunset) as the Sabbath—the Judahites who rejected Christ and who mixed with non-Israel people. But most who don't know the key of racial identity are not likely to identify the true Sabbath and who God gave it to.

1 J.N. Andrews, *History of the Sabbath,* Battle Creek: Steam Press, 1873.

THE SABBATH AS A TEST FOR ISRAEL

An examination of the Sabbath issue shows that there is something very unique about the subject especially in regards to Israel's relation to God. The Sabbath was the first law given to Israel even before they left Egypt—the keeping of the first day of feast of unleavened bread as a Sabbath (Exodus 12:15-16). And was the first specific law given just after they left Egypt—the gathering of manna six days but not on the seventh day (Exodus 16:5, 22-26). Consequently it was the first law violated by Israel (Exodus 16:27-29).

It was the Sabbath issue which was the major issue of contention between the Jews and Christ, and was also the main reason the Jews and Pharisees had Him crucified.

The Sabbath was the issue which caused and brought about the repeated conquests and eventual destruction of old Jerusalem. The question we now face is, will it also bring about the destruction of the new Jerusalem? America could very well rise or fall depending on how we deal with the Sabbath issue. Not because the proper day is going to determine of the matter, but rather because of the ignorance and hypocrisy that prevails in matters of law, history and the ways of God due to this issue.

The Sabbath issue is an issue which God is using to test us. It is a test of our faith, to see if we will believe His word that the Sabbath would be a "sign" for His people "forever." It is a test in our faith in Divine Providence as to whether to believe what apparently seems right (Saturday Sabbath), or the abundant evidence God has established to the contrary. It is a test of our fellowship, to see if we are going to allow it to be a source of division and strife among us. It is a test of our hearts and minds, to see if we can overcome our stubbornness, pride, and hypocrisy. God places many such issues as the Sabbath before us to try and test our hearts and minds. — *"for the righteous God tries the hearts and the reigns"* (Psa. 7:9; Jer. 11:20).

If we are unable to get the Sabbath issue right, then there is a whole host of legal and political problems we will never be able to understand and correct for the same reason. Thus the

Sabbath issue is once again a test for God's people, to see if they will allow their pride, hypocrisy and pharisaical thinking to destroy them. God is testing us by the Sabbath issue, and it is a test we must pass if we are ever to regain our rights and our country, for God is not going to give political power into the hands of hypocrites.

If we want to claim Saturday as the Sabbath, and reject Sunday (midnight to midnight) as such, then to avoid the inconsistency and hypocrisy we have to do the following:

- We no longer can complain of or speak against the actions of those who try to change and destroy the foundations of America, or against government corruption and usurpation and other acts contrary to the ancient common law of our race.
- We would have to say that America is Babylon or the Beast because its very foundations require the violation of God's Fourth Commandment.
- We would have to assert that it was not Divine Providence, but a "satanic" force that caused the early Christians and our ancestors in Europe and America to reject Saturday (sunset to sunset) and follow Sunday (midnight to midnight).
- We can not rightly ever say that this is a "Christian Nation."
- We have to acknowledge that the Jews generally kept God's Fourth Commandment, but the Israelite Christians never did.

With the Sabbath issue a new brand of Phariseeism has been revealed which causes this hypocrisy and error in thinking. It exists with those who want so strongly to be Godly and try so hard to extract *all* answers from the Bible that they are blind to information in other areas. Thus most have been misled on the Sabbath issue because they have their nose buried so far into the Bible that they cannot see obvious facts and truths God has placed right in front of them. They are so enthralled in the Bible *only* that they cannot even see their own blatant hypocrisy. The Sabbath issue now stands before us as a critical test, a test which will have a profound affect upon our destiny and future.

Once we pass this test, new doors will be opened allowing us advance God's Kingdom, and to understand and solve many other issues and problems now before us.

This book deals with not just the Sabbath issue, but with several major problems that have developed due to the Sabbath controversy. It reveals problems of ignorance, lawlessness, hypocrisy, and phariseeism, all of which have blinded millions to the ways of God and His plan for the observance of the Sabbath.

This book also covers and explains the following:

- The Anglo-Saxon history on the Sabbath in Europe over a span of 1200 years.
- American law and history on the Sabbath.
- The Testimony of the Christian Fathers of the post-Apostolic era on the Sabbath.
- The meaning of the Sabbath commands in the Old Testament.
- The true position of Jesus towards the Sabbath, and His conflicts with the issue.
- Apostolic precedents regarding the Sabbath and the Lord's Day.
- Analyzes the question of whether or not the Sabbath has been changed.

This material covers the keys needed to unlock the truth of not only the Sabbath issue, but of many other critical problem issues facing Christians today.

The course of future events could very well depend on how we deal with the Sabbath issue.